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EDGAR ALLAN POE.

THE HISTORY OF THE

REIGN OF

CHARLES THE FIRST

BY

JOHN BURNET

OF THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

IN TWO VOLUMES

THE SECOND

VOLUME

OXFORD

PRINTED BY J. BARNARD, ST. ALBANS

1704

EDGAR ALLAN POE

His Life, Letters, and Opinions.

BY

JOHN H. INGRAM.

" Unhappy Master whom unmerciful Disaster
Followed fast and followed faster till his Songs one burden bore—
Till the dirges of his Hope that melancholy burden bore
Of ' Never,—nevermore.' "

With Portraits of Poe and his Mother.

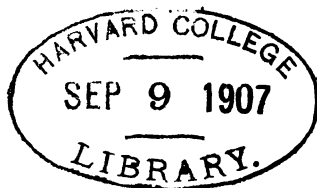
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EDGAR ALLAN POE.

CHAPTER XV.

THE "BROADWAY JOURNAL."

ON the 8th of March 1845, Edgar Poe became joint-editor, with two New York journalists, of the *Broadway Journal*, a publication of no particular influence or circulation. One of his coadjutors devoted himself to the musical and dramatic section of the paper, and the other shared the literary department with their new associate. The views of Poe and his literary companion being diametrically opposite, it was arranged that each should be free to enunciate his own opinions independently of the other—an arrangement that produced a somewhat novel, not to say unseemly, appearance, during the few weeks the system lasted.

No sooner was Poe reseated in an editorial chair than he resumed an unfortunate "Discussion with Outis," which he had commenced in Willis's paper,

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A

the *Evening Mirror*, on the unsavoury subject of plagiarism, and which he now continued, from week to week, in the columns of the *Broadway Journal*. How this unprofitable disputation arose was thus : In the *Evening Mirror* for the 14th of January, Poe had published a short notice of "The Waif," a collection of fugitive verses edited by Longfellow, observing in the course of his remarks :—

"We conclude our notes on the 'Waif' with the observation that, although full of beauties, it is infected with a *moral taint*—or is this a mere freak of our own fancy? We shall be pleased if it be so ; but there *does* appear, in this little volume, a very careful avoidance of all American poets who may be supposed especially to interfere with the claims of Mr. Longfellow. These men Mr. Longfellow can continually *imitate* (*is that the word?*), and yet never even incidentally commend."

"Much discussion ensued," says Poe, proceeding to narrate in the *Journal* that "a friend of Mr. Longfellow's penned a defence, which had at least the merit of being thoroughly impartial ; for it defended Mr. Longfellow not only from the one-tenth of very moderate disapproval in which I had indulged, but from the nine-tenths of my enthusiastic admiration into the bargain. . . . This well-intended defence was published in the *Mirror* with a few words of preface by Mr. Willis, and of postscript by myself. Still dissatisfied, Mr. Longfellow, through a second friend, addressed to Mr. Willis an expostulatory letter, of which the *Mirror* printed only the following portion :—

"It has been asked, perhaps, why Lowell was neglected in

this collection? Might it not as well be asked why Bryant, Dana, and Halleck were neglected? The answer is obvious to any one who candidly considers the character of the collection. It professed to be, according to the Poem [*sic*, but query Proem.—J. H. I.], from the humbler poets; and it was intended to embrace pieces that were anonymous, or which were [*sic*, query not] easily accessible to the general reader—the *waifs* and *estrays* of literature. To put anything of Lowell's, for example, into a collection of *waifs*, would be a particular liberty with pieces which are all collected and christened."

"Not yet content," continues Poe, "or misunderstanding the tenor of some of the wittily-*put* comments which accompanied the quotation, the aggrieved poet, through one of the two friends, as before, or perhaps through a third, finally prevailed upon the good-nature of Mr. Willis to publish an explicit declaration of his disagreement with '*all* the disparagement of Longfellow' which had appeared in the criticism in question.

"Now when we consider that many of the points of censure made by me in this *critique* were absolutely as plain as the nose upon Mr. Longfellow's face, that it was impossible to gainsay them, that we defied him and his coadjutors to say a syllable in reply to them, and that they held their tongues and not a syllable said—when we consider all this, I say, then the satire of the '*all*' in Mr. Willis's manifesto becomes apparent at once. Mr. Longfellow did not see it; and I presume his friends did not see it. I did. In my mind's eye it expanded itself thus:—

"'My dear sir, or sirs, what will you have? You are an insatiable set of cormorants, it is true; but if you will only let me know what you desire, I will satisfy you, if I die for it. Be quick! merely say what it is you wish me to admit,

and (for the sake of getting rid of you) I will admit it upon the spot. Come! I will grant at once that Mr. Longfellow is Jupiter Tonans, and that his three friends are the Graces; or the Furies, which ever you please. As for a fault to be found with either of you, *that* is impossible, and I say so. I disagree with *all*, with every syllable of the disparagement that ever has been whispered against you up to this date, and (not to stand upon trifles) with all that ever *shall* be whispered against you henceforward, for ever and for ever.' . . . In the meanwhile Mr. Briggs in this paper, in the *Broadway Journal*, did me the honour of taking me to task for what he supposed to be my insinuations against Mr. Aldrich."

In his reply in the *Mirror* (prefaced by a few words from Mr. Willis), the poet reiterated the charge that "*Somebody* is a thief," with reference to the palpable "parallelism" between Hood's beautiful poem "The Deathbed," and some verses entitled "A Death-bed," by Mr. J. Aldrich; but, after a collation of the two pieces, and a demonstration that the resemblance was too close to be accidental, he left it to the public to form its own judgment upon the affair. "At this point the matter rested for a fortnight," continues the narration, "when a fourth friend of Mr. Longfellow took up the cudgels for him, in another communication to the *Mirror*," which communication, signed "Outis," Poe reprinted in full, and then proceeded to criticise thus:—

"What I admire in this letter is the gentlemanly grace of its manner, and the chivalry which has prompted its com-

position. What I do *not* admire is all the rest. In especial, I do not admire the desperation of the effort to make out a case. No gentleman should degrade himself, on any grounds, to the paltriness of *ex parte* argument; and I shall not insult Outis at the outset by assuming for a moment that he (Outis) is weak enough to suppose me (Poe) silly enough to look upon all this abominable rigmarole as anything better than a very respectable specimen of special pleading.

"As a general rule, in a case of this kind, I should wish to begin with the beginning, but as I have been unable, in running my eye over Outis' remarks, to discover that they have any beginning at all, I shall be pardoned for touching them in the order which suits me best. Outis need not have put himself to the trouble of informing his readers that he has 'some acquaintance with Mr. Longfellow.' It was needless, also, to mention that he did not know *me*. I thank him for his many flatteries, but of their inconsistency I complain. To speak of me in one breath as a poet, and in the next to insinuate charges of 'carping littleness,' is simply to put forth a flat paradox. When a plagiarism is committed and detected, the word 'littleness' and other similar words are immediately brought into play. To the words themselves I have no objection whatever; but their application might occasionally be improved.

"Is it altogether impossible that a critic be instigated to the exposure of a plagiarism, or still better, of plagiarism generally, wherever he meets it, by a strictly honourable and even charitable motive? Let us see. A theft of this kind is committed—for the present we will admit the *possibility* that a theft of this character can be committed. The chances, of course, are that an established author steals from an unknown one, rather than the converse; for in proportion to the circulation of the original is the risk of the

plagiarism's detection. The person about to commit the theft hopes for impunity altogether on the ground of the reconditeness of the source from which he thieves. But this obvious consideration is rarely borne in mind. We read a certain passage in a certain book. We meet a passage nearly similar in another book. The first book is not at hand, and we cannot compare dates. We decide by what we fancy the probabilities of the case. The one author is a distinguished man—our sympathies are always in favour of distinction. 'It is not likely,' we say in our hearts, 'that so distinguished a personage as A would be guilty of plagiarism from this B, of whom nobody in the world has ever heard. We give judgment, therefore, at once against B of whom nobody in the world has ever heard ; and it is for the very reason that nobody in the world has ever heard of him that, in ninety-nine cases out of the hundred, the judgment so precipitously given is erroneous. Now, then, the plagiarist has not merely committed a wrong in itself—a wrong whose incomparable meanness would deserve exposure on absolute grounds—but he, the guilty, the successful, the eminent, has fastened the degradation of his crime—the retribution which should have overtaken it in his own person—upon the guiltless, the toiling, the unfriended struggler up the mountainous path of Fame. Is not sympathy for the plagiarist, then, about as sagacious and about as generous as would be the sympathy for the murderer, whose exultant escape from the noose of the hangman should be the cause of an innocent man's being hung? And because I, for one, should wish to throttle the guilty, with a view of letting the innocent go, could it be considered proper on the part of any 'acquaintance of Mr. Longfellow's' who came to witness the execution—could it be thought, I say, either chivalrous or decorous, on

the part of this 'acquaintance,' to get up against me a charge of 'carping littleness,' while we stood amicably together at the foot of the gallows?

"In all this I have taken it for granted that such a sin as plagiarism exists. We are informed by Outis, however, that it does *not*. 'I shall not charge Mr. Poe with plagiarism,' he says, 'for, as I have said, such charges are perfectly absurd.' An assertion of this kind is certainly *funny* (I am aware of no other epithet which precisely applies to it); and I have much curiosity to know if Outis is prepared to swear to its truth—holding right aloft in his hand, of course, and kissing the back of Disraeli's 'Curiosities,' or the 'Mélanges' of Suard and André. But if the assertion is funny (and it *is*), it is by no means an original thing. It is precisely, in fact, what all the plagiarists and all the 'acquaintances' of plagiarists, since the flood, have maintained with a very praiseworthy resolution."

The poet continues, for several more paragraphs, in a similar strain; and in the following number of the *Journal* resumed what he styled "The Voluminous History of the little Longfellow War," by a further reply to the "Letter of Outis." This continuation is wiredrawn, and far from brilliant, and deferred till the following week "interesting developments," evidently with the intention of prolonging and increasing any excitement the discussion may have aroused. A few paragraphs may be cited, however:—

"Here is a gentleman," says Poe, "who writes, in certain respects, as a gentleman should, and who yet has the

effrontery to base a defence of a friend from the charge of plagiarism, on the broad ground that no such thing as plagiarism ever existed. I confess that to an assertion of this nature there is no little difficulty in getting up a reply. . . . What could any judge, on any bench in the country, do but laugh or swear at the attorney who should begin his defence of a petty-larceny client with an oration demonstrating, *à priori*, that no such thing as petty-larceny ever had been, or, in the nature of things, ever could be, committed? . . . 'What is plagiarism?' demands Outis at the outset, *avec l'air d'un Romain qui sauve sa patrie*—'what is plagiarism, and what constitutes a good ground for the charge?' . . . He answers the two questions by two others. . . . 'Did no two men,' he says, 'ever think alike without stealing one from the other? Or, thinking alike, did no two men ever use the same or similar words to convey the thoughts, and that without any communication with each other? To deny it is absurd.' Of course it is—very absurd; and the only thing *more* absurd that I can call to mind, at present, is the supposition that any person ever entertained an idea of denying it. . . .

"But let me aid Outis to a distinct conception of his own irrelevance. I accuse his friend, specifically, of a plagiarism. This accusation Outis rebuts by asking me with a grave face—not whether the friend might not, in this individual case, and in the compass of eight short lines, have happened upon ten or twelve peculiar identities of thought, and identities of expression, with the author from whom I charge him with plagiarising—but simply whether I do not admit the *possibility* that once, in the course of eternity, some two individuals might not happen upon a single identity of thought, and give it voice in a single identity of expression.

Now, frankly, I admit the possibility in question, and would request my friends to get ready for me a strait-jacket if I did not. . . .

"I put no faith in the *nil admirari*, and am apt to be amazed at every second thing which I see. One of the most amazing things I have yet seen is the complacency with which Outis throws to the right and left his anonymous assertions, taking it for granted that because he (Nobody) asserts them, I must believe them as a matter of course. However, he is quite in the right. I am perfectly ready to admit anything that he pleases, and am prepared to put as implicit faith in his *ipse dixit* as the Bishop of Autun did in the Bible—on the ground that he knew nothing about it at all. . . .

"He wishes to show, then, that Mr. Longfellow is innocent of the imitation with which I have charged him, and that Mr. Aldrich is innocent of the plagiarism with which I have *not* charged him; and this duplicate innocence is expected to be proved *by* showing the possibility that a certain, or that any uncertain, series of coincidences may be the result of pure accident. Now, of course, I cannot be sure that Outis will regard my admission as a service or a disservice, but I admit the possibility at once. . . . But, in admitting this, I admit just nothing at all, so far as the advancement of Outis' proper argument is concerned. The affair is one of *probabilities* altogether, and can be satisfactorily settled only by reference to their calculus."

The following week a still more voluminous budget appeared from Poe's pen, in continuation of this interminable discussion, but from it only these lines—of biographical import—require citation:—

"If Outis has his own private reasons for being disgusted with what he terms the 'wholesale mangling of victims without rhyme or reason,' there is not a man living, of common sense and common honesty, who has not better reason (if possible) to be disgusted with the insufferable cant and shameless misrepresentations practised by just such persons as Outis, with the view of decrying by sheer strength of lungs—of trampling down—of rioting down—of mobbing down any man with a soul that bids him come out from among the general corruption of our public press, and take his stand upon the open ground of rectitude and honour.

"The Outises who practise this species of bullyism are, as a matter of course, anonymous. . . . Their low artifices are insinuated calumnies, and indefatigable whispers of regret from post to pillar, that 'Mr. So-and-so, or Mr. This-and-that, *will* persist in rendering himself so dreadfully unpopular'—no one, in the meantime, being more thoroughly and painfully aware than these very Outises that the unpopularity of the just critic who reasons his way, guiltless of dogmatism, is confined altogether within the limits of the influence of the victims, without rhyme and reason, who have been mangled by wholesale. Even the manifest injustice of a Gifford is, I grieve to say, an exceedingly popular thing; and there is *no* literary element of popularity more absolutely and more universally effective than the pungent impartiality of a Wilson or a Macaulay. In regard to my own course—without daring to arrogate to myself a single other quality of either of these eminent men than that pure contempt for mere prejudice and conventionality which actuated them all, I will now unscrupulously call the attention of the Outises to the fact that it was during what they (the Outises) would insinuate to be the unpopularity of my 'wholesale mangling

of the victims without rhyme and reason,' that, in one year, the circulation of the *Southern Messenger* (a five-dollar journal) extended itself from seven hundred to nearly five thousand—and that, in little more than twice the same time, *Graham's Magazine* swelled its list from five to fifty-two thousand subscribers.

"I make no apology for these egotisms, and I proceed with them without hesitation—for, in myself, I am but defending a set of principles which no honest man need be ashamed of defending, and for whose defence no honest man will consider an apology required. . . . Not even an *Outis* can accuse me, with even a decent show of verisimilitude, of having ever descended, in the most condemnatory of my reviews, to that personal abuse which, upon one or two occasions, has indeed been levelled at myself, in the spasmodic endeavours of aggrieved authors to rebut what I have ventured to demonstrate. . . . What I have written remains, and is readily accessible in any of our public libraries. I have had one or two impotent enemies and a multitude of cherished friends—and both friends and enemies have been, for the most part, literary people; yet no man can point to a single *critique*, among the very numerous ones which I have written during the last ten years, which is either wholly fault-finding or wholly in approbation; nor is there an instance to be discovered, among all that I have published, of my having set forth, either in praise or censure, a single opinion upon any critical topic of moment, without attempting, at least, to give it authority by something that wore the semblance of a reason. . . . Very many of the most eminent men in America, whom I am proud to number among the sincerest of my friends, have been rendered so solely by their approbation of my comments upon their own works—com-

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ments in great measure directed *against* themselves as authors—belonging altogether to that very class of criticism which it is the petty policy of the Outises to cry down.”

To this terribly lengthy discussion anent plagiarism a postscript was subsequently indited by the poet, in which he sought to prove that *unconscious* plagiarism “is in the direct ratio of the poetic sentiment—of the susceptibility to the poetic impression; and, in fact,” he concluded, “all literary history demonstrates that, for the most frequent and palpable plagiarisms, we must search the works of the most eminent poets.”

That the results of this “Discussion” were far from beneficial to the contemporary fame and fortune of Poe few can doubt; that it added to the number of his enemies—who were scarcely so few or so impotent as he affected to believe—is equally certain; whilst that it could in no way increase the presumed “multitude of cherished friends,” whatever it may have effected in the quantity of his readers, needs no demonstration.

It is pleasant to turn from this bitter repast to the more genial topic of the poet's more literary work, although his gall was by no means all expended in the above profitless warfare. In the *Broadway Journal* for March, for instance, he contrived to deliver some very severe and, that they were true, ill-endured blows at certain national foibles, in a short article on “Satiri-

cal Poems." In the following month he returned to his more natural manner, contributing revised versions of "The Valley Nis" and "The Doomed City," and a new tale, "Some Words with a Mummy," to the *American Review*.

"Some Words with a Mummy" is written in that humorous style which was so unnatural with Poe, and which his sombre—his ultra-poetic temperament—would have prevented him from ever becoming proficient in. It is, perhaps, his best effort in that direction, and contains many of those cutting satiric touches which he bandied about so freely, if unwisely, at this transition period of his life—the period when constant collisions with journalistic sharpshooters and jealous cliques caused a more decided deterioration of his *morale* than did any preceding or succeeding calamities. It was his frequent misfortune to attempt to fight men of the world with their own weapons, and with the invariable consequences that happen to those who touch pitch. A single paragraph from the last-named tale will show why it is that Poe's writings are so unpopular with some of his countrymen; the Americans being, as a general rule, too susceptible to relish a joke at their own expense. The hero, Count Allamistakeo [all-a-mistake-o], the resuscitated Egyptian mummy, is informed of the benefits of the democratic institutions enjoyed by the Yankees; their advantages

of having universal suffrage, and no king. "He listened with marked interest, and, in fact, seemed not a little amused. When we had done," continues the narrator, "he said that a great while ago there had occurred something of a very similar sort. Thirteen Egyptian provinces determined all at once to be free, and so set a magnificent example to the rest of mankind. They assembled their wise men, and concocted the most ingenious constitution it is possible to conceive. For a while they managed remarkably well, only their habit of bragging was prodigious. The thing ended, however, in the consolidation of the thirteen states, with some fifteen or twenty others, in the most odious and insupportable despotism that ever was heard of upon the face of the earth. I asked what was the name of the usurping tyrant. As well as the Count could recollect, it was *Mob*."

The April number of the *Southern Literary Messenger* contained an announcement to the effect that its old conductor and contributor was about to resume writing for its pages. "It needs an Argus to guard and watch the press," says the editor, "and, to enable the *Messenger* to discharge its part, we have engaged the services of Mr. E. A. Poe, who will contribute a monthly *critique raisonnée* of the most important forthcoming works in this country and Europe." The poet's multifarious labours, however, prevented him carrying out this pro-

jected scheme, although he subsequently recommenced writing for the *Messenger*, and continued a contributor during the rest of his life.

During April and May Poe published several minor articles and book notices in the *Broadway Journal*, and as many of these are uncollected, and their paternity unknown, the more interesting will be alluded to, and quoted from, in these pages. It may, indeed, be remarked here, that the poet's own revised copy of the *Journal* being in our possession, and his articles therein which were published anonymously, or over *noms de plume*, having his initials appended in pencil, we are enabled to rescue much interesting matter from oblivion.

"Human Magnetism" was a subject Poe was now deeply interested in, although he was not to be deceived by many of the impostures prevalent. Noticing a work on this subject, and pointing out certain views in which he differed from its author, he took occasion to say—"Most especially do we disagree with him in his (implied) disparagement of the work of Chauncey Hare Townshend, which we regard as one of the most truly profound and philosophical works of the day—a work to be valued properly only in a day to come." "Anastatic Printing" was also a subject that attracted his attention, and upon which he wrote a short article, replete with idiosyncratic

remarks. The invention was one that greatly excited his imagination, and caused him to foresee a palmy future for authors; to anticipate the time when writers would be enabled to publish their works "without the expensive interference of the type-setter, and the often ruinous intervention of the publisher." This literary millennium was to produce, among other unfulfilled blessings, "some attention to legibility of manuscript" by men of letters; and "the cultivation of accuracy in manuscript," opined the poet, would "tend, with an inevitable impetus, to every species of improvement in style; more especially in the points of concision and distinctness; and this again, in a degree even more noticeable, to precision of thought and luminous arrangement of matter;" and his conclusion was, that "at present the literary world is a species of anomalous congress, in which the majority of the members are constrained to listen in silence, while all the eloquence proceeds from a privileged few. In the new *régime* the humblest will speak as often and as freely as the most exalted, and will be sure of receiving just that amount of attention which the intrinsic merit of their speeches may deserve."

A revival of Sophocles' "Antigone" having been attempted in New York, in imitation of similar revivals in Europe, Poe, in commenting very severely upon the performance, said—"Apart from all this, there is about

the 'Antigone,' as well as about all the ancient plays, an insufferable *baldness*, or platitude, the inevitable result of inexperience in art—but a baldness, nevertheless, which pedantry would force us to believe the result of a studied and supremely artistic simplicity alone. Simplicity is, indeed, a very lofty and very effective feature in all true art—but *not* the simplicity which we see in the Greek drama. The simplicity of the Greek sculpture is everything that can be desired, because here the art in itself is the simplicity in itself, and in its elements. The Greek sculptor chiselled his forms from what he saw before him every day, in a beauty far nearer to perfection than any work of any Cleomenes in the world. But in the drama, the *direct*—the straightforward, *un-German* Greek had no Nature so directly presented, from which to copy his conceptions. . . . To the Greeks, beyond doubt, their drama *seemed* perfection—and this fact is absurdly urged as proof of their drama's perfection in itself. It need only be said, in reply, that their art and their sense of art must have been necessarily on a level."

Adverting to the absurdity of attempting to reproduce a Greek play before a modern audience, especially with such a want of all the requisite appliances as this little New York theatre displayed, Poe paused to bestow his praise upon the successful manner in which Men-

delssohn has wedded his music to the Hellenic drama: he must, he says, "have been inspired when he conceived the plan. . . . He had," remarked Poe, "many difficulties to contend with; his own natural style must be abandoned, and the cramped and unmelodious system of the Greek unisonous singing adopted. To preserve that distinctive character, and still render the music acceptable to modern ears, must have taxed the utmost ingenuity of the composer. But he has succeeded to a marvel."

Some of Poe's strictures on the performance and the performers of "Antigone" aroused the anger of the manager, or director, or whatever he was, of the theatre, and he indited an amusingly pompous epistle to the poet, addressed to "Edgar Poe, Esq., &c., &c., &c., Author of THE RAVEN," in which, after stating that he deemed his *critique* "*characterised much more by ill-nature and an illiberal spirit, than by fair and candid, or even just criticism,*" and that, therefore, he, the great Somebody, "*in justice to myself, have withdrawn your (Poe's) name from the free list.*" On this display of "Achilles' wrath" Poe wrote an amusing paper in the *Broadway Journal*, from which this paragraph may be cited:—

"We are not wrong (are we?) in conceiving that Mr. — is in a passion. We are not accustomed to compositions of precisely this character—(that is to say, notes written in large

capitals, with admiration notes for commas,—the whole varied occasionally with lowercase) — but still we think ourselves justified in imagining that Mr. — was in a passion when he sent us this note from his suite of *boudoirs* at the Astor House. In fact, we fancy that we can trace the gradations of his wrath in the number and impressiveness of his under-scoring. The SIRS!! for example, are exceedingly bitter; and in THE RAVEN, which has five black lines beneath it, each one blacker than the preceding, we can only consider ourselves as devoted to the infernal gods."

Among more serious subjects which followed in the *Journal* from Poe's pen, may be mentioned, as amongst his uncollected writings, an article on the science of Street Paving; a review of Leigh Hunt, in which the conclusion was arrived at that *taste* was his *forte*, but that of critical analysis he was utterly deficient; a sympathetic notice of "Eothen," then recently issued, drew forth the remark that its author "brings the East to us more vividly than any other Eastern traveller has done." A *critique* on Old English Poetry, replete with Poësque passages, and noticeable for its glowing enthusiasm for "The Ancient Mariner," followed, and from among old poems singled out for especial commendation, was Marvell's exquisitely tender lines on the "Maiden's Lamentation for her Fawn." A scari-fication of "Poems" by a Mr. Lord, and a friendly notice of "Philothea"—in which were some significant allusions to "Zanoni"—concluded the week's number.

In May the tale of "Three Sundays in a Week" appeared in the *Journal*, in the insatiable pages of which periodical were republished, all more or less revised, and frequently over *noms de plume*, nearly the whole of Poe's stories, and a large portion of his poems. As an extract from *The New World*, some stanzas in parody of "The Raven" appeared in this month's issue, under the title of "A Gentle Puff;" and were republished with the editorial remark that this one only, out of the many complimentary notices they received, would be reprinted, and it because of its uniqueness. As the opinion of a contemporary journalist on Poe's non-respect of persons in his critical capacity, one stanza may be worth citation:—

"Neither rank nor station heeding, with his foes around him
bleeding,
Sternly, singly, and alone, his course he kept upon that floor;
While the countless foes attacking, neither strength nor valour
lacking,
On his goodly armour hacking, wrought no change his visage o'er,
As with high and honest aim he still his falchion proudly bore,
Resisting error evermore."

Amid critical notices by the poet, other than those adverted to already, are many interesting opinions upon literature and kindred topics; and his indignation is particularly aroused by some deprecatory comments of certain reviewers of "the august works of Tennyson

and Miss Barrett." "It is worse than sacrilege," exclaims Poe, "to intrust to *such hands* poems which, if we are entitled to estimate the merit of anything by its effect on the greatest intellects and the noblest hearts, are *divine*, if there be any divinity within the soul of man."

"The Power of Words," one of the best of Poe's prose poems, appeared in the *Democratic Review* for June. The tale, if such it may be termed, for it is utterly devoid of incident, is merely the conversation of two disembodied spirits as they soar through the infinite vistas of space. Their discourse on such syllogisms as that only the acquiring, and not the possessing, knowledge, produces happiness, passes by natural transitions into a discussion—every line of which is pregnant with poetic suggestion—on the *physical power of words*, and concludes with a *dénouement* as startling as that of any of its author's works.

In the *Broadway Journal* for this month Poe published a sketch of a very different description, on Magazine-writing, entitled "Peter Snooks." It was called forth as a commentary on a paper by Mr. Duyckinck on Magazine Literature; is replete with excellent remarks and, it might almost be said, with prophecies that have already been fulfilled. Alluding to the relative value of European and American magazine articles, and to some of the dis-

22 *Disadvantages of Authors in Poe's Time.*

advantages under which contributors of the latter *then* laboured, Poe said :—

“We are so circumstanced as to be unable to pay for elaborate compositions—and, after all, the true invention is elaborate. There is no greater mistake than the supposition that a true originality is a mere matter of impulse or inspiration. To originate, is carefully, patiently, and understandingly, to combine. The few American magazinists who ever think of this elaboration at all, cannot afford to carry it into practice for the paltry prices offered them by our periodical publishers. For this, and other glaring reasons, we are behind the age in a *very* important branch of literature, a branch which, moreover, is daily growing in importance, and which, in the end (not far distant), will be the *most* influential of all the departments of letters.

“We are lamentably deficient not only in invention proper, but in that which is more strictly *art*. What American, for instance, in penning a criticism, ever supposes himself called upon to present his readers with more than the exact stipulation of his title—to present them with a criticism, and *something beyond*? Who thinks of making his *critique* a work of art in itself, independently of its critical opinions? a work of art, such as are all the more elaborate and most effective reviews of Macaulay? Yet these reviews we have evinced no incapacity to appreciate when presented. The best American review ever penned is miserably ineffective when compared with the notice of Montagu's ‘Bacon,’ and yet this latter is, in general, a piece of tawdry sophistry, owing everything to a consummate, to an exquisite arrangement—to a thorough and just sufficiently comprehensive diffuseness, to a masterly *climacing* of points—to a style which dazzles the

understanding with its brilliancy, but not more than it misleads it by its perspicuity, causing us so distinctly to comprehend that we fancy we coincide—in a word, to the perfection of art—of all the art which a Macaulay can wield, or which is applicable to any criticism that a Macaulay could write.”

Hereafter follows an analysis of “Peter Snooks,” that tale being referred to as a specimen of the artistic manner in which an experienced English magazinist constructs *his* story, a most remarkable deficiency in that branch of literature being ascribed to Americans of the period. Poe declared, indeed, that except Hawthorne and one or two others, there “was not even a respectable skilful tale-writer on that side the Atlantic.”

In July, Messrs. Wiley & Putnam announced for publication, in their *Library of American Books*, a volume of “Tales by Edgar A. Poe” himself. This collection was made for the publishers by Mr. E. A. Duyckinck, editor of the well-known *Cyclopedia of American Literature*. Besides many of the poet's previously published tales, the book contained the new story of “Mesmeric Revelation,” a story issued soon afterwards in the *Columbian Magazine*. Poe was somewhat annoyed at the selection made, and wrote to a correspondent:—

“It may be some years before I publish the rest of my tales, essays, &c. The publishers cheat—and I

must wait till I can be my own publisher. The collection of tales issued by Wiley & Putnam were selected by a gentleman whose taste does not coincide with my own, from seventy-two written by me at various times—and those chosen are *not* my best, nor do they fairly represent me in any respect.”

Subsequently the author seems to have somewhat modified his views as to the nature of this collection—for the editor of which he always expressed a high opinion. Small as was the volume, and limited its contents in quantity, the quality elicited a large amount of admiration and respect, not only in the United States but also in Europe. The “Tales” were published simultaneously in New York and London, and from the latter city Mr. Martin F. Tupper wrote to the publisher, “Shall we make Edgar Poe famous by a notice in the *Literary Gazette*?” Mr. Putnam does not state whether he accepted this generous offer; it is, therefore, difficult to say how much of the poet’s renown is due to the mediation of the “Proverbial Philosopher.” Probably the most important of the foreign reviews of these “Tales” was the appreciative *critique* by Monsieur E. D. Forgues that appeared in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*. The reviewer, after an analysis of the various stories, proceeds to comment upon their shortness, and the greater probability of fame such writings possess over the wire-drawn inanities of our

novelists, concluding with real prescience, that "*il sera opportun de les comparer quand le temps aura consolidé la réputation naissante du conteur étranger et—qui sait ? —ébranlé quelque peu celles de nos romanciers féconds.*" This, and other highly flattering notices of the young foreigner, gave an impetus to his reputation in Europe, which may be deemed to have culminated in the *vrai-semblant* translations of Baudelaire, who, indeed, spent many years of his life in an endeavour to thoroughly identify his mind with that of his favourite *littérateur*, Edgar Poe, and who has reproduced many of Poe's finest tales with but little, if any, loss of vigour and originality. Indeed, it is chiefly due to the efforts of Baudelaire—to the, in some respects, kindred genius of him to whom Victor Hugo wrote :—" *Vous avez doté le ciel de l'art d'on ne sait quel rayon macabre—vous avez créé un frisson nouveau*"—that Poe's works have become standard classics in France. Edgar Poe, it may be pointed out, is the only American writer really well known and popular in that country. In Spain his "*Historias Extraordinarias*" speedily acquired fame, and have been thoroughly nationalised ; whilst in Germany his poems and tales both have been frequently translated ; also in Italy three or four separate translations of the latter have been published.

Poe forwarded a copy of his "*Tales*" to Mrs. Brown-ing, then Miss Barrett, who, writing to a correspondent

26 *Poe becomes Sole Editor of the "Broadway."*

shortly afterwards, remarked—"There is a tale of his which I do not find in this volume, but which is going the rounds of the newspapers, about mesmerism, throwing us all into most admired disorder, or dreadful doubts as to whether it can be true, as the children say of ghost-stories. The certain thing in the tale in question is the power of the writer, and the faculty he has of making horrible improbabilities seem near and familiar." The story to which Mrs. Browning referred was "The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar," not published until December of that year.

In July, the sole management of the *Broadway Journal* devolved upon Poe, although the publication did not become his own property for some months later. The new volume opened with the usual flourish of trumpets from the publisher, who, after thanking his numerous friends for their aid in "the very difficult task of establishing a literary and critical weekly," informs them that "the success of the work, in the brief period of its existence, has been, he truly believes, beyond precedent, and that from a brilliant past he looks confidently to a triumphant future."

To the *Journal* for this month Poe contributed, besides revisions of his earlier tales and poems, a lengthy review of Mr. Hirst's poems, a sympathetic one of Mr. Hoyt's quaint "Chaunt of Life," several voluminous *critiques* on *The Drama*, and many shorter

notices and notes, of more or less interest. His dramatic *critiques* were chiefly occupied with the acting of Mrs. Mowatt—of whose grace and beauty he spoke in terms of enthusiastic admiration—and from the first of them these significant sentences may be cited:—

“We have no sympathies with the prejudices which would have dissuaded Mrs. Mowatt from the stage. There is no cant more contemptible than that which habitually decries the theatrical profession—a profession which, in itself, embraces all that can elevate and ennoble, and absolutely nothing to degrade. If some, if many, or if even nearly all of its members are dissolute, this is an evil arising not from the profession itself, but from the unhappy circumstances which surround it. . . . In the mere name of *actress* she can surely find nothing to dread—nothing, or she would be unworthy of the profession, not the profession unworthy her. The theatre is ennobled by its high facilities for the development of genius—facilities not afforded elsewhere in equal degree. By the spirit of genius, we say, it is ennobled, it is sanctified beyond the sneer of the fool or the cant of the hypocrite. The actor of talent is poor of heart, indeed, if he do not look with contempt upon the mediocrity even of a king. The writer of this article is himself the son of an actress, has invariably made it his boast, and no earl was ever prouder of his earldom than he of his descent from a woman who, although well born, hesitated not to consecrate to the drama her brief career of genius and of beauty.”

Poe's contribution to the *American Review* for this month was the poem of “Eulalie,” and to *Graham's Magazine* that most suggestive story, “The Imp of

the Perverse." Probably in no other tale of this author will such originality of investigation, and such acumenical analysis of a monomania, be discoverable, as in this one. The field of research would appear to have been quite unexplored in this direction, and had, perchance, been left so, because hitherto no one had at once combined in his own person the power to analyse, and the morbid "sixth sense" of *perversity* analysable. Many, most persons, have, undoubtedly, to some extent, and at certain times, felt promptings to act in a manner they know to be diametrically opposed to their own interests, and that for no reasonable reason; yet few, whose mental equilibrium is invariably unshaken, come within the morbid circle of those depicted by Poe, with whom "the assurance of the wrong, or error, of any action is often the one unconquerable *force* which impels us, and alone impels us, to its prosecution." Whether this "overwhelming tendency to do wrong for the wrong's sake" will not, as the poet declares, "admit of analysis, or resolution, into ulterior elements," or whether it really "is a radical, a primitive, impulse," may safely be left to the professed *psychologist* to discuss; but no thoughtful person will refuse to admit the truth of the illustrations Poe offers in corroboration of his theory. The love, inherent in human nature, to dally with danger, is faithfully rendered in these words:—

"We stand upon the brink of a precipice. We peer into the abyss—we grow sick and dizzy. Our first impulse is to shrink from the danger. Unaccountably, we remain. By slow degrees our sickness, and dizziness, and horror, become merged in a cloud of unnameable feeling. By gradations, still more imperceptible, this cloud assumes shape, as did the vapour from the bottle out of which arose the genius in the Arabian Nights. But out of this, *our* cloud upon the precipice's edge, there grows into palpability a shape far more terrible than any genius or any demon of a tale, and yet it is but a thought, although a fearful one, and one which chills the very marrow of our bones with the fierceness of the delight of its horror. It is merely the idea of what would be our sensations during the sweeping precipitancy of a fall from such a height; and this fall—this rushing annihilation—for the very reason that it involves that one most ghastly and loathsome of all the most ghastly and loathsome images of death and suffering which have ever presented themselves to our imagination—for this very cause do we now the most vividly desire it; and because our reason violently deters us from the brink, *therefore* do we the more impetuously approach it. There is no passion in nature so demoniacally impatient as that of him who, shuddering upon the edge of a precipice, thus meditates a plunge. To indulge for a moment in any attempt at *thought* is to be inevitably lost; for reflection but urges us to forbear, and *therefore* it is, I say, that we *cannot*. If there be no friendly arm to check us, or if we fail in a sudden effort to prostrate ourselves backward from the abyss, we plunge and are destroyed.

"Examine these and similar actions as we will, we shall find them resulting solely from the spirit of the *perverse*.

30 *Conservatism is the Enemy of Progress.*

We perpetrate them merely because we feel that we should *not*. Beyond or behind this there is no intelligible principle; and we might indeed deem this perverseness a direct instigation of the arch-fiend, were it not occasionally known to operate in furtherance of good."

Thoughts and investigations like these are not the stock of a conventional writer; even if they be not original discovery, they are the result of personal research, and are handled with a power, and clearness, and fascination, that no attempt at depreciation can disserve from true genius.

In August, Poe published in the *American Review* a crucial examination of certain native dramatic works, under the title of "The American Drama." The poet advances some very strong arguments to prove the fallacy of the often made assertion that "the Drama has declined;" but if the specimens of contemporary native art he proceeds thereupon to criticise might be deemed a fair sample of the efforts of To-day, it would have to be confessed that, in this instance, the *vox populi* is in the right. The article affords occasion for adducing some very pungent and forcible reasoning. "The great opponent to Progress is Conservatism," says the poet, "in other words—the great adversary of Invention is Imitation: the propositions are in spirit identical. Just as an art is imitative, it is

stationary. The most imitative arts are the most prone to repose—and the converse.”

In this and the following month, a series of “Marginal Notes,” in continuation of the “Marginalia” of the *Democratic Review*, were issued in the *Lady's Book*. They vary in value, but embody in a condensed and pithy manner many of Poe's idiosyncratic ideas. Some of the sayings, indeed, as in the following sentences, are of real autobiographic application:—“So vitally important is this last (*i.e.*, industry), that it may well be doubted if anything to which we have been accustomed to give the title of ‘a work of genius’ was ever accomplished without it; and it is chiefly because this quality and genius are nearly incompatible, that ‘works of genius’ are few, while mere men of genius are, as I say, abundant.” But although, as Poe points out, industry must combine with genius to produce a *chef-d'œuvre*, he is very careful to warn his readers against the ancient error that industry itself *is* genius.

The *Broadway Journal* during these two months manifested numerous proofs of its editor's industry, and no lack of his genius. In a running commentary, evidently written in great haste, on Thomas Hood's works, he took occasion to express his admiration of many of that poet's exquisite lyrics, restraining, however, his enthusiasm until he came to “The Haunted

House,” which struck kindred fire from him; calling forth the remark, that had Hood written nothing else, “it would have sufficed to render him immortal.” Many *critiques* of books and authors—native and foreign—and all more or less marked by his distinguishing traits of thought, appeared in the weekly columns of the *Journal*. On the 16th August “Lenore,” a most musical chaunt, founded upon its author’s juvenile poem of “The Pæan,” was published, and in the following number the weird story of “The Tell-Tale Heart.” This tale well deserves to rank amid Poe’s best works, not only on account of its able construction, and masterly delineation of a homicidal monomania, but because it embodies within its few short pages some of those hitherto undescribed, but universally experienced, “touches of nature” which make the whole world kin. How true—terribly true—is the description of the old man’s agony, while he is listening in the silent night for the uplifting of the door-latch, and seeks, but vainly, to persuade himself that his fears are groundless; whilst he says to himself, “It is nothing but the wind in the chimney;” “It is only a mouse crossing the floor;” or, “It is merely a cricket which has made a single chirp.” There is more of real horror in the hints of such a narration, than in all the imaginary bloodshed with which tragedy has drenched the stage.

The same issue of the *Journal* contained an editorial

note defending the editor against an allegation by a contemporary, anent "The American Drama" *critique*, that he, Poe, could never find anything to admire in Longfellow's writings. "Now this is doing us the grossest injustice," says Poe, for "from Mr. Longfellow's first appearance in the literary world until the present moment, we have been, if not his warmest admirer and most steadfast defender, at least *one* of his warmest and most steadfast. We even so far committed ourselves, in a late public lecture, as to place him at the very head of American poets. Yet, because upon several occasions we have thought proper to *demonstrate* the sins, while displaying the virtues, of Professor Longfellow, is it just or proper, or even courteous, on the part of *The Gazette*, to accuse us, in round terms, of uncompromising hostility to this poet?" Poe had made too many enemies not to find these anonymous insinuations and misrepresentations of daily occurrence, and it is a somewhat pitiable sight to see him stooping, although often unavoidably, to defend himself against such scurrilities. One of these charges was somewhat amusingly put, and noticed in the *Broadway* in a not unfriendly manner. The *jeu d'esprit* may be cited here, by way of contrast to the generally but too dark shades in the story of the "Raven," as his friends liked to style the poet:—

"The Rev. Arthur Coxe's 'Saul, a Mystery,' having been
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condemned in no measured terms by Poe of the *Broadway Journal*, and Green of the *Emporium*, a writer in the *Hartford Columbian* retorts as follows :—

An entertaining history,
Entitled 'Saul, a Mystery,'
Has recently been published by the Reverend Arthur Coxe.
The poem is dramatic,
And the wit of it is Attic,
And its teachings are emphatic of the doctrines orthodox.

But Mr. Poe, the poet,
Declares he cannot go it—
That the book is very stupid—or something of that sort :
And Green, of *The Emporium*,
Um, tells a kindred story,
And swears like any Tory that it isn't worth a groat.

But maugre all the croaking
Of the 'Raven,' and the joking
Of the verdant little fellow of the used-to-be review,
THE PEOPLE, in derision
Of their impudent decision,
Have declared, without division, that the 'Mystery will do.'

"The *truth*, of course, rather injures an epigram than otherwise; and nobody will think the worse of the one above when we say that we have expressed *no opinion whatever* of 'Saul.' 'Give a dog a bad name,' &c. Whenever a book is abused, it is taken for granted that it is we who have been abusing it. Mr. Coxe has written some very beautiful poems, and 'Saul' may be one of them for anything that we know to the contrary."

Other noteworthy things by Poe, which appeared in the *Journal* during the two months referred to, were a laudatory review of Mrs. Oakes Smith's "Poems ;"

a trenchant *critique* on "Christopher North," and an analysis of his critical powers ; a defence of Machiavelli—spoken of as "a man of profound thought, of great sagacity, of indomitable will, and unrivalled during his time, if not in knowledge of the human, at least in knowledge of the Italian, heart ;"—new remarks on "Leigh Hunt," "Festus," and the effects of travel on literary wares. With respect to this last item, "it is astonishing to see how a magazine article," said the poet, "like a traveller, spruces up after crossing the sea. We ourselves have had the honour of being pirated without mercy—but as we found our articles improved by the process (at least in the opinion of our countrymen), we said nothing, as a matter of course. We have written paper after paper which attracted no notice at all until it appeared as original in *Bentley's Miscellany* or the *Paris Charivari*. The Boston *Notion* * once abused us very lustily for having written 'The House of Usher.' Not long afterwards Bentley published it anonymously, as original with itself,—whereupon the *Notion*, having forgotten that we wrote it, not only lauded it *ad nauseam*, but copied it *in toto*."

Charles Lamb next comes under the poet's critical notice, on account of his "Essays of Elia," and he is, opined Poe, the most original of all the British essay-

* Edited by R. W. Griswold.

ists. "Of all original men, too, Lamb," said his reviewer, "has the fewest demerits. Of gross faults he has none at all. His merest extravagances have about them a symmetry which entitles them to critical respect. And his innumerable good qualities who shall attempt to depict?"

But literary squabbles still occupied a large portion of the poet's time and his journal—the *literary* world was too much with him, either for his comfort or reputation. A certain Mr. Jones now excited his wrath by his [published] opinions on "American Humour," or rather his attacks on authors he deemed deficient of that element. "The French," said this Mr. Jones, "have no humour;" to which Poe retorted, "Let him pray Heaven that in Hades he fall not into the clutches of Molière, of Rabelais, of Voltaire!" and forthwith proceeded to administer a severe castigation to the offending journalist. The following week the skirmishing was resumed, but nothing very desperate appears to have taken place in this case; although a regular hornet's nest of pilferers were stirred up by an exposure, in the same number, of their plagiarisms. From these miserable petty matters it is pleasant to pass to some truly noble thoughts on Milton, aroused by the publication of his "Prose Works," the language of which, said the American poet, after due allowance has been made for the time

Poe becomes Proprietor of the "Journal." 37

in which they were written, "no man has ever surpassed, if, indeed, any man has ever equalled, in purity, in force, in copiousness, in majesty, or, in what may be termed, without the least exaggeration, a gorgeous magnificence of style." In the course of this article occasion was taken to defend Bacon from the accusation of being "the meanest of mankind." "We would undertake to show *à priori*," said Poe, "that no man, with Bacon's thorough appreciation of the true and beautiful, could, by any possibility, be 'the meanest,' although his very sensibility might make him the weakest 'of mankind.'"

Week after week this work of reviewing books, authors, drama, and fine arts, and attacking or defending people and opinions, went on with more or less skill, as if the poet were aided by some hundred-handed demon. Much parade was made in editorial notes of the literary help received from well-known *littérateurs*, but, beyond a few verses, little was contributed by any of the persons named. In the last week of October Poe became proprietor as well as editor of the *Journal*, and inaugurated his assumption of the sole control of the publication by the commencement of an absurd disputation with some Boston newspapers. This petty but lengthy journalistic warfare arose thus: In consequence of the *furor* excited by the lecture the poet gave in New York, in

the early part of the year, he was invited to Boston to deliver a poem in the Lyceum of that city. It is stated that the lecture-course of this institution was waning in popularity, and that Poe's fame being at its zenith, he was invited as a great attraction for the opening of the winter session. Unfortunately the poet accepted the invitation, having the intention, his earliest biographer avers, of writing an original poem for the occasion, upon a subject which had haunted his imagination for years, but his manifold cares and anxieties prevented the accomplishment of the purpose—if such he had—and he contented himself with the recitation of his juvenile poem of "Al Aaraaf."

"I remember him well, as he came on the platform," says one who was present. "He was the best realisation of a poet in feature, air, and manner, that I had ever seen, and the unusual paleness of his face added to its aspect of melancholy interest. He delivered a poem that no one understood, but at its conclusion gave the audience a treat which almost redeemed their disappointment. This was the recitation of his own 'Raven,' which he repeated with thrilling effect. It was something well worth treasuring in memory. . . . Poe," adds this authority, "after he returned to New York, was much incensed at Boston criticism on his poem."

Probably the poet was not incensed to any very

great extent at what was said about him, but doubtless deemed it a favourable opportunity, for his journal's sake, to make what he termed "a bobbery." A just view of the case was taken by a contemporary publication, the Charlestown *Patriot*, when it remarked that for a man endowed with such a genius, and constituted as was Poe, "it was a blunder to accept the appointment which called him to deliver himself in poetry before the Boston Lyceum. Highly imaginative men," as it says truly, "can scarcely succeed in such exhibitions. . . . In obeying this call to Boston," it continues, "Mr. Poe committed another mistake. He had been mercilessly exercising himself as a critic at the expense of some of their favourite writers. The swans of New England, under his delineation, had been described as mere geese, and those, too, of none of the whitest. . . . Poe had dealt with favourites of Boston unsparingly, and they hankered after their revenge. In an evil hour, then, did he consent to commit himself, in verse, to their tender mercies. It is positively amusing to see how eagerly all the little wittings of the press, in the old purlieus of the Puritan, flourish the critical tomahawk about the head of their critic. In their eagerness for retribution, one of the papers before us actually congratulates itself and readers on the (asserted) failure of the poet. . . . Mr. Poe committed an error in consenting to address an audience in verse, who, for

three mortal hours, had been compelled to sit and hear Mr. Caleb Cushing in prose. The attempt to speak, after this, in poetry, and fanciful poetry, too, was sheer madness. The most patient audience in the world must have been utterly exhausted by the previous infliction. But it is denied that Mr. Poe failed at all. He had been summoned to recite poetry. It is asserted that he did so. The *Boston Courier*, one of the most thoughtful of the journals of that city, gives us a very favourable opinion of the performance which has been so harshly treated. 'The poem,' says that journal, 'called "The Messenger Star," was an eloquent and classic production, based on the right principles, containing the essence of *true* poetry, mingled with a gorgeous imagination, exquisite painting, every charm of metre, and a graceful delivery.'

A week after the recitation of his poem Poe began to comment, in a tone of badinage, upon the remarks made by some of the Bostonian papers with respect to his recent performance: "We have been quizzing the Bostonians," was his assertion, "and one or two of the more stupid of their editors and editresses have taken it in high dudgeon." In the next issue of the *Broadway Journal*, the poet, after quoting a vindictory paragraph from the *Boston Sunday Times*, proceeds:—

"Our excellent friend Major Noah has suffered himself to be cajoled by that most beguiling of all little divinities, Miss

Walters of the *Transcript*. We have been looking all over her article, with the aid of a taper, to see if we could discover a single syllable of truth in it, and really blush to acknowledge that we cannot. The adorable creature has been telling a parcel of fibs about us, by way of revenge for something that we did to Mr. Longfellow (who admires her very much), and for calling her 'a pretty little witch' into the bargain.

"The facts of the case seem to be these :—We *were* invited to 'deliver' (stand and deliver) a poem before the Boston Lyceum. As a matter of course, we accepted the invitation. The audience *was* 'large and distinguished.' Mr. Cushing preceded us with a very capital discourse. He was much applauded. On arising we were most cordially received. We occupied some fifteen minutes with an apology for not 'delivering,' as is usual in such cases, a didactic poem—a didactic poem, in our opinion, being precisely no poem at all. After some further words—still of apology—for the 'indefinitiveness' and 'general imbecility' of what we had to offer—all so unworthy a Bostonian audience—we commenced, and, with many interruptions of applause, concluded. Upon the whole, the approbation was considerably more (the more the pity too) than that bestowed upon Mr. Cushing.

"When we had made an end, the audience of course arose to depart—and about one-tenth of them, probably, had really departed, when Mr. Coffin, one of the managing committee, arrested those who remained by the announcement that we had been requested to deliver 'The Raven.' We delivered 'The Raven' forthwith—(without taking a receipt)—were very cordially applauded again—and this was the end of it, with the exception of the sad tale in-

vented to suit her own purposes by that amiable little enemy of ours, Miss Walters. We shall never call a woman 'a pretty little witch' again, as long as we live.

"We like Boston. We were born there—and perhaps it is just as well not to mention that we are heartily ashamed of the fact. The Bostonians are very well in their way. Their hotels are bad. Their pumpkin-pies are delicious. Their poetry is not so good. Their common is no common thing—and the duck-pond might answer, if its answer could be heard, for the frogs.

"But with all these good qualities the Bostonians have no soul. They have always evinced towards us the basest ingratitude for the services we rendered them. . . . When we accepted, therefore, an invitation to 'deliver' a poem in Boston, we accepted it simply and solely because we had a curiosity to know how it felt to be publicly hissed, and because we wished to see what effect we could produce by a neat little *impromptu* speech in reply. Perhaps, however, we overrated our own importance, or the Bostonian want of common civility—which is not quite so manifest as one or two of their editors would wish the public to believe. We assure Major Noah that he is wrong. The Bostonians are well-bred—as *very* dull persons very generally are.

"It could scarcely be supposed that we would put ourselves to the trouble of composing for the Bostonians anything in the shape of an *original* poem. We did not. We had a poem (of about five hundred lines) lying by us—one quite as good as new—one, at all events, that we considered would answer sufficiently well for an audience of Transcendentalists. *That* we gave them—it was the best that we had—for the price—and it *did* answer remarkably well. Its name was *not* 'The Messenger Star'—who but Miss

Walters would ever think of so delicious a little bit of invention as that? We had *no* name for it at all. The poem is what is occasionally called a 'juvenile poem'—but the fact is, it is anything but juvenile now, for we wrote it, printed it, and published it, in book form, before we had fairly completed our tenth year. We read it *verbatim*, from a copy now in our possession, and which we shall be happy to show at any moment to any of our inquisitive friends. . . .

"As regards the anger of the Boston *Times* and one or two other absurdities—as regards, we say, the wrath of Achilles—we incurred it—or rather its manifestation—by letting some of our cat out of the bag a few hours sooner than we had intended. Over a bottle of champagne that night, we confessed to Messrs. Cushing, Whipple, Hudson, Field, and a few other natives who swear not altogether by the frog-pond—we confessed, we say, the soft impeachment of the hoax. *Et hinc illæ iræ.* We should have waited a couple of days."†

This lengthy letter did not conclude Poe's comments upon the matter; for three weeks he permitted the affair to remain dormant, so far as his own journal was concerned, but at the expiration of that period he issued another long editorial, beginning with the remark, "As we very confidently expected, our friends in the southern and western country (*true* friends and *tried*) are taking up arms in our cause—and more especially in the cause of a national as distinguished from a sectional literature. They cannot see (it appears) any further necessity for being ridden to death by New England." After quoting certain opinions of the press,

the poet goes on to say, that if asked “What is the most exquisite of sublunary pleasures?” the reply would be “the making a fuss, or, in the classical words of a Western friend, the ‘kicking up a bobbery;’” adding, “never was a ‘bobbery’ more delightful than that which we have just succeeded in ‘kicking up’ all round about Boston Common. We never saw the Frogpondians so lively in our lives. They seem absolutely to be upon the point of waking up . . . to certain facts which have long been obvious to all the world except themselves—the facts that there exist other cities than Boston . . . other vehicles of literary information than the ‘Down-East Review.’”

Other newspaper opinions are then cited, and other over-wrought banterings indulged in, and then what was really the gist of the article was given in these words:—

“We knew very well that, among a certain *clique* of the Frogpondians, there existed a predetermination to abuse us under *any* circumstances. We knew that write what we would they would swear it to be worthless. We knew that were we to compose for them a ‘Paradise Lost’ they would pronounce it an indifferent poem. It would have been very weak in us, then, to put ourselves to the trouble of attempting to please these people. We preferred pleasing ourselves. We read before them a ‘juvenile,’ a *very* ‘juvenile’ poem—and thus the Frogpondians were *had*—were delivered up to the enemy bound hand and foot. Never were a set of

people more completely demolished. They have blustered and flustered, but what have they done or said that has not made them more thoroughly ridiculous? what, in the name of Momus, is it *possible* for them to do or to say?

"We 'delivered' them the 'juvenile poem,' and they received it with applause. This is accounted for by the fact that the *clique* (contemptible in numbers as in everything else) were overruled by the rest of the assembly. These malignants did not *dare* to interrupt by their preconceived hisses the respectful and profound attention of the majority. . . . The poem being thus well received, in spite of this ridiculous little cabal—the next thing to be done was to abuse it in the papers. Here, they imagined, they were sure of their game. But what have they accomplished? The poem, they say, is bad. We admit it. We insisted upon this fact in our prefatory remarks, and we insist upon it now, over and over again.

"Repelled at these points, the Frogpondian faction hire a thing they call the 'Washingtonian Reformer' (or something of that kind), to insinuate that we must have been 'intoxicated' to have become possessed of sufficient audacity to 'deliver' such a poem to the Frogpondians. In the first place, why cannot these miserable hypocrites say 'drunk' at once, and be done with it? In the second place, we are perfectly willing to admit that we *were* drunk—in the face of at least eleven or twelve hundred Frogpondians who will be willing to take oath that we were *not*. We are willing to admit either that we were drunk, or that we set fire to the Frogpond, or that once upon a time we cut the throat of our grandmother. The fact is, we are perfectly ready to admit anything at all—but what has cutting the throat of our grandmother to do with our poem, or the Frogpondian. ✓

46 *The Far-famed Attack on Frogpondium.*

stupidity? We shall get drunk when we please. As for the editor of the 'Jeffersonian Teetotaler' (or whatever it is), we advise her to get drunk too, as soon as possible—for when sober she is a disgrace to the sex, on account of being so awfully stupid.

"*N.B.* The 'Washingtonian Teetotaler' is edited by a little old lady in a mobcap and spectacles—at least we presume so, for every second paper in Boston *is*."

Here it should be explained, for those who, knowing Poe's invariable courtesy towards women, fail to recognise the subject of his satire, that the publication alluded to was edited by *Mr.* Edmund Burke, who, said the poet, "assured us, with tears in *her* eyes, that *she* was not a little old lady in a mobcap and spectacles."

From the *postscriptum* to this editorial may be cited these few more sentences:—"Miss Walters (the Siren!) has seen cause, we find, to recant all the ill-natured little insinuations she has been making against us (mere white lies—she need not take them so much to heart), and is now overwhelming us with apologies—things which we have never yet been able to withstand. She defends our poem on the ground of its being 'juvenile,' and we think the more of her defence because she herself has been juvenile so long as to be a judge of juvenility."

During the following weeks Poe delivered a few

more Parthian darts at these Bostonian editors, but, so far as the *Broadway Journal* was concerned, this was the end of the far-famed attack on Frogpondium. The whole squabble was petty, and little worthy of the strenuous exertions it aroused against the poet. Those hurried jocular, although overstrained, newspaper jottings,—thrown off in the midst of cares and anxieties of all kinds, and whilst their unfortunate writer, suffering under almost chronic impecuniosity, and unable to pay for literary aid, was obliged to supply “copy” for nearly the whole of the *Journal*,—have been referred to, and adduced from, as evidence of Poe’s irretrievably bad nature. Work of a more pleasing nature, however, was now occupying his attention and time. In October he published in his journal the poetically worded sketch of “The Island of the Fay,” in which some of his most salient *traits* of thoughts are expressed. In this composition he pointed out how human figures disfigure a landscape; reiterated his oft-told love of solitude; and affected to believe, with the old geographer Pomponius Mela, that the earth is a living *sentient* being. In this same prose poem Poe, in drawing attention to the palpable fact that *space* is an object in our universe, laid down a proposition that really contained the germ of his subsequent great work “Eureka.”

In the following month of November, the tale of

"Spectacles" appeared in the *Broadway Journal*, which also contained the announcement that Poe was now its "sole proprietor and editor;" *Graham's Magazine* contained "The System of Dr. Tarr and Professor Fether," and "Mesmeric Revelations" was published in the *Columbian Magazine*. This last story, and its sequel of "The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar"—published next month in the *American Review*—created a more profound and wider-spread excitement than any other of his previous works. He was overwhelmed with inquiries as to their being fact or fiction, and carefully avoided giving the public a definite answer. Commenting upon *The Tribune's* remarks about the latter tale—that terrible tale of mesmerising a man *in articulo mortis*—Poe said, "For our part, we find it difficult to understand how any dispassionate *transcendentalist* can doubt the facts as we state them; they are by no means so incredible as the marvels which are hourly narrated, and believed, on the topic of mesmerism. *Why* cannot a man's death be postponed indefinitely by mesmerism? *why* cannot a man talk after he is dead? *why?*—*why?*—that is the question; and as soon as the *Tribune* has answered it to our satisfaction we will talk to it further." And in reprinting "The Facts" in his journal, he notes that the article "has given rise to some discussion—especially in regard to the truth or falsity of

the statement made. It does not become *us*, of course," he adds, "to offer one word on the point at issue. We have been requested to reprint the article, and do so with pleasure. We leave it to speak for itself. We may observe, however, that there are a certain class of people who pride themselves upon Doubt as a profession."

The wordy warfare as to the facts of "The Facts" being a record of real circumstance or not, waxed warmer, and even people who should have known better took the side of the believers. Dr. Collyer, a well-known mesmerist, was among the many who expressed their belief as to the "case of Monsieur Valdemar" being a true one, and he wrote this letter to Poe on the subject:—

"BOSTON, December 16, 1845.

"DEAR SIR—Your account of M. Valdemar's case has been universally copied in this city, and has created a very great sensation. It requires from me no apology, in stating, that I have not the least doubt of the *possibility* of such a phenomenon; for I did actually restore to active animation a person who died from excessive drinking of ardent spirits. He was placed in his coffin ready for interment.

"You are aware that death very often follows excessive excitement of the nervous system; this arising from the extreme prostration which follows; so that the vital powers have not sufficient energy to react.

"I will give you the detailed account on your reply to
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this, which I require for publication, in order to put at rest the growing impression that your account is merely a *splendid creation* of your own brain, not having any truth in fact. My dear sir, I have battled the storm of public derision too long on the subject of Mesmerism, to be now found in the rear ranks—though I have not publicly lectured for more than two years, I have steadily made it a subject of deep investigation.

"I sent the account to my friend Dr. Elliotson of London; also to *The Zoist*—to which journal I have regularly contributed.

"Your early reply will oblige, which I will publish, with your consent, in connection with the case I have referred to. Believe me yours, most respectfully,

"ROBERT H. COLLYER."

In public allusion to this communication, Poe humorously said, "We have no doubt that Dr. Collyer is perfectly correct in all that he says, and all that he desires us to say; but the truth is, there is a very small modicum of truth in the case of M. Valdemar, which, in consequence, may be called a hard case—*very* hard for M. Valdemar, for Dr. Collyer, and ourselves. If the story was not true, however, it should have been, and perhaps *The Zoist* may discover that it is true, after all."

In England "Valdemar's Case" also startled the public, and actually found certain *pseudo* scientific writers ready to accept it as a narration of facts. *The Popular Record of Modern Science*, a London weekly

paper sub-styling itself "A Journal of Philosophy and General Information," reprinted the tale with the comment, "It bears internal evidence of authenticity!" and in criticising the remarks of the *Morning Post*—which also reprinted the narration—took occasion to say :

"Credence is understood to be given to it at New York, within a few miles of which city the affair took place, and where, consequently, the most ready means must be found for its authentication or disproof. The initials of the medical men, and of the young medical student, must be sufficient in the immediate locality to establish their identity, especially as M. Valdemar was well known, and had been so long ill as to render it out of the question that there should be any difficulty in ascertaining the names of the physicians by whom he had been attended. In the same way the nurses and servants, under whose cognisance the case must have come during the seven months which it occupied, are of course accessible to all sorts of inquiries. It will therefore appear that there must have been too many parties concerned to render prolonged deception practicable. The angry excitement and various rumours, which have at length rendered a public statement necessary, are also sufficient to show that *something* extraordinary must have taken place. No steamer will leave England for America till the 3rd of February, but within a few weeks of that time, we doubt not, it will be possible to lay before the readers of *The Record* information which will enable them to come to a pretty accurate conclusion."

X It is easy to imagine the delight with which Poe

chuckled over the absurd sophistry of these *pseudo* scientists, and over the success, in an English self-titled philosophical paper, of his “ ‘Valdemar Case’ hoax,” as he called it in a letter to a friend. He would find more true gratification, however, in these allusions to the work in a letter of Mrs. Browning’s:—“Then there is a tale of his which I do not find in this volume,* but which is going the rounds of the newspapers, about mesmerism, throwing us all into most admired disorder, or dreadful doubts as to whether it can be true, as the children say of ghost stories. The certain thing in the tale in question is the power of the writer, and the faculty he has of making horrible improbabilities seem near and familiar.”

To Mrs. Browning Poe now dedicated, in most enthusiastic terms, a new collection of his poems, published in November by Messrs. Wiley and Putnam, as “The Raven and other Poems.” In the *Preface* to the volume the poet pathetically remarks, “Events not to be controlled have prevented me from making, at any time, any serious effort in what, under happier circumstances, would have been the field of my choice. With me poetry has been not a purpose, but a passion; and the passions should be held in reverence; they must not—they cannot at will be excited with an eye to the paltry compensations, or the more paltry com-

* *I.e.*, the 1845 edition of “Tales.”

mendations, of mankind." And, in a note to the *Poems written in Youth*, he says,—chiefly with reference to the remark of Charles Dickens in the *Foreign Quarterly Review*, that Poe "had all Tennyson's spirituality, and might be considered as the best of his imitators"—"Private reasons—some of which have reference to the sin of plagiarism, and others to the date of Tennyson's first poems—have induced me, after some hesitation, to republish these, the crude compositions of my earliest boyhood." The volume of poetry did not appear to make such a deep impression upon the public as did the volume of "Tales," partly, perchance, on account of the contents being already well known through reprints, and partly because it contained little beyond "The Raven" likely to earn the approbation of the multitude.

On turning to the less literary, although scarcely less public, life of Poe at this period, he is seen mixing in the best society New York could boast of, and charming every one by the fascination of his manners and the brilliancy of his conversational powers. Mrs. Oakes Smith informs us, that "It was in the brilliant circles that assembled in the winter of 1845-46 at the houses of Dr. Dewey, Miss Anna C. Lynch, Mr. Lawson, and others, that we first met Edgar Poe. His manners were, at these reunions, refined and pleasing, and his style and scope of conversation that of a gentleman

and a scholar. Whatever may have been his previous career, there was nothing in his appearance or manner to indicate his excesses. He delighted in the society of superior women, and had an exquisite perception of all the graces of manner and shades of expression. He was an admiring listener, and an unobtrusive observer. We all recollect the interest felt at the time in everything emanating from his pen—the relief it was from the dulness of ordinary writers, the certainty of something fresh and suggestive. His critiques were read with avidity; not that he convinced the judgment, but that people felt their ability and courage. Right or wrong he was terribly in earnest.” “Like De Quincey,” as Mrs. Whitman remarks, “he never *supposed* anything, he always knew.”

This last named lady, in her beautiful monograph on “Poe and his Critics,” instances, as evidence of the habitual kindness and courtesy of the poet’s nature, an incident that occurred at one of the soirées above alluded to:—“A lady, noted for her great lingual attainments, wishing to apply a wholesome check to the vanity of a young author, proposed inviting him to translate for the company a difficult passage in Greek, of which language she knew him to be profoundly ignorant, although given to a rather pretentious display of Greek quotations in his published writings. Poe’s earnest and persistent remonstrance against this

piece of *méchanceté* alone averted the embarrassing test." Trifling as this anecdote may appear, it is good proof of that generous and charitable disposition which they who knew him only from the scandalous calumnies of his detractors have so unwarrantably denied him the possession of.

Those who have thus far followed Poe's story through these pages, will know what a passionate adoration he bore towards the beautiful sharer of his luckless lot. "Sometimes," says Mrs. Whitman, "his fair young wife was seen with him at the weekly assemblages in Waverley Place. She seldom took part in the conversation, but the memory of her sweet and girlish face, always animated and vivacious, repels the assertion, afterwards so cruelly and recklessly made, that she died a victim to the neglect and unkindness of her husband, 'who,' as it has been said, 'deliberately sought her death that he might embalm her memory in immortal dirges.' . . . We might cite the testimony alike of friends and enemies," continues Mrs. Whitman, "to Poe's unvarying kindness towards his young wife and cousin, if other testimony were needed than that of the tender love still cherished for his memory, by one whose life was made doubly desolate by his death—the sister of his father, and the mother of his Virginia. It is well known to those acquainted with the parties,"

Mrs. Whitman proceeds to narrate, "that all who have had opportunities for observation in the matter have noticed her husband's tender devotion to her during her prolonged illness. Even Dr. Griswold speaks of having visited him during a period of illness caused by protracted anxiety and watching by the side of his sick wife. It is true that, notwithstanding her vivacity and cheerfulness at the time we have alluded to, her health was, even then, rapidly sinking; and it was for her dear sake, and the recovery of that peace which had been so fatally perilled amid the irritations and anxieties of his New York life, that Poe left the city and removed to the little Dutch cottage in Fordham, where he passed the remaining three years of his life."

Returning to the poet's labours on the *Broadway Journal*, we find some noteworthy critiques in the last November number, on various works of contemporary and permanent interest. Professor Raumer's book on America is noticed, chiefly as an instance of the difficulties experienced by foreigners to obtain correct information about American literature, and the fact that the author professedly derived his knowledge of their poets from Griswold's compilation is commented upon in stinging terms. Victor Hugo is next alluded to, his fictions being referred to as unequalled, whilst his "*Notre Dame*" calls forth Poe's enthusiastic sympathy, as "a work of high genius controlled by

consummate art." Tennyson's "Poems" then come under review, and their creator is spoken of as "a poet who (in our own humble, but sincere opinion) is *the greatest* that ever lived. We are perfectly willing to undergo all the censure," subjoins Poe, "which so heretical an opinion may draw down upon us." This month's literary labours were concluded by the publication, in *Graham's Magazine*, of the "System of Dr. Tarr and Professor Fether," a tale of no particular value.

In the December numbers of his *Journal* Poe gave a lengthy review of the Poems of Mrs. Osgood, of whom more will be heard later on, some appropriate remarks on Mrs. Norton's "Child of the Isles," sympathetic allusions to Prescott, reference to "Love and Mesmerism" by Horace Smith, as the work of "an author who never did anything ill," and manifold minor reviews and notices, including one on the works of Shelley, opined to be "a poet whom all poets, and whom poets only, appreciate."

The days of his periodical were numbered, but before resigning the control of its columns, the poet contrived to enliven the "Editorial Miscellany" with another small skirmish. "The Brook-Farm" folk, now best remembered by their embalmment in Hawthorne's "Blithedale Romance," went out of their way to find fault with Poe, whose fame, their chief journal alleged,

was degenerating into "notoriety, through a certain blackguard warfare which he had been waging against the poets and newspaper critics of New England, and which it would be most charitable to impute to insanity." After this last insinuation—a somewhat awkward one for a people so situated as were the "Farmers"—its propounders, reviewing Poe's recent volume of poems, concluded their animadversions by declaring that the author "does not write for Humanity; he has more of the art than the soul of poetry. He affects to despise the world while he writes for it. He certainly has struck out a remarkable course: the style and imagery of his earliest poems mark a very singular culture, a judgment most severe for a young writer, and a familiarity with the less hackneyed portions of classic lore and nomenclature. He seems to have had an idea of working out his forms from pure white marble. But the poet's humanity is wanting; a morbid egotism repels you. He can affect you with wonder, but rarely with the thrill of any passion, except, perhaps, of pride, which might be dignity, and which therefore always is interesting. We fear this writer even courts the state described by Tennyson:—

" 'A glorious devil, large in heart and brain,
That did love beauty only.' "

Of these final not altogether unflattering, and in

some respects not quite unfaithful, remarks, Poe took no note ; but the innuendoes as to his insanity, insulting a Boston audience, ill motives, plagiarism of Tennyson, and so forth, he accompanied by a running commentary as caustic as it was pertinent, introducing the subject in this fashion :—

"*The Harbinger*—edited by 'The Brook-Farm Phalanx'—is, beyond doubt, the most reputable organ of the Crazyites. We sincerely respect it—odd as this assertion may appear. It is conducted by an assemblage of well read persons who mean no harm, and who, perhaps, can do less. Their objects are honourable, and so forth—all that anybody can understand of them—and we really believe that Mr. Albert Brisbane, and one or two other ladies and gentlemen, understand all about them that is necessary to be understood. But what we, individually, have done to *The Harbinger*, or what we have done to 'The Brook-Farm Phalanx,' that 'The Brook-Farm Phalanx' should stop the ordinary operations at Brook Farm, for the purpose of abusing us, is a point we are unable to comprehend. If we have done anything to affront 'The Brook-Farm Phalanx' we will make an apology forthwith—provided 'The Brook-Farm Phalanx' (which we have a great curiosity to see) will just step into our office, which is 304 Broadway."

With this farewell volley Poe's connection with the periodical may be said to have ceased, for although it did not expire until the following month, and the latest number contained some noteworthy remarks by the poet on Cromwell and on Faber's Speaking Autom-

aton, the editorial management had then passed into the hands of a certain "Thomas Dunn English," of whom more will be heard presently. In his *Valedictory*, the ex-editorial proprietor stated, "Unexpected engagements demanding my whole attention, and the objects being fulfilled, so far as regards myself personally, for which the *Broadway Journal* was established, I now, as its editor, bid farewell as cordially to foes as to friends."

CHAPTER XVI.

THE LITERATI OF NEW YORK.

It is time that a lady who exercised no slight influence over Edgar Poe, during one portion of his short career, should now be introduced to the reader. Frances Sargent Locke, afterwards Osgood, was one of a literary family, both her sisters and her brother having attained some celebrity, in their days, as authors. She was the daughter of a prosperous American merchant, who took a pride in encouraging the poetic efforts of his children. Whilst Frances was still a girl in years, but already noted for her beauty, Mr. S. Osgood, an artist of reputation, undertook to paint her portrait, and during the sittings is stated to have charmed the fair maiden—as Othello did Desdemona—by a recital of his adventures at home and abroad. As might be imagined, the result of these sittings was the formation of an attachment between the youthful poetess and her portrait painter, and, eventually, their marriage.

In 1834 the Osgoods visited Europe, and took up their residence in London, of the Royal Academy of which city the artist had formerly been a pupil. The

talents of the husband, and the grace and beauty of the wife, appear to have interested the good people of the British metropolis in their favour. Portraits of the Hon. Mrs. Norton, the poet Rogers, and other persons of celebrity, were painted by Mr. Osgood, whilst his young bride earned her moiety of reputation by a graceful volume of verse, published as "A Wreath of Wild Flowers from New England." A drama written by the fair authoress at the instigation of Sheridan Knowles, was accepted for representation at Drury Lane, but indefinitely postponed performance in consequence of the recall of the Osgoods to America, on account of the illness and death of the authoress' father.

The gifted pair returned to their native land in 1840, and speedily took a foremost station in literary and artistic society, Mr. Osgood, however, occasionally going away on lengthy tours in search of that Beautiful which he might have found at home. Meanwhile, the poetess became a frequent contributor of graceful *vers de société*, and literary sketches, to the leading American magazines and annuals, and in this capacity attracted the notice of Edgar Poe. He reviewed her poems with that chivalrous rather than critical enthusiasm he reserved for female authors, and deemed for her "Not to write poetry, not to act it, think it, dream it, and be it, is entirely out of her power." Upon the poet's removal to New York he found the

Osgoods already resident there. It was impossible for the two families to mix in the same circles, as they did, without meeting, and Poe's first interview with the fair authoress has been thus described in Mrs. Osgood's own words :—

“My first meeting with the poet was at the Astor House. A few days previous, Mr. Willis had handed me, at the *table d'hôte*, that strange and thrilling poem entitled *The Raven*, saying that the author wanted my opinion of it. Its effect upon me was so singular, so like that of ‘weird, unearthly music,’ that it was with a feeling almost of dread I heard he desired an introduction. Yet I could not refuse without seeming ungrateful, because I had just heard of his enthusiastic and partial eulogy of my writings, in his lecture on American Literature. *I shall never forget the morning* when I was summoned to the drawing-room by Mr. Willis to receive him. With his proud and beautiful head erect, his dark eyes flashing with the electric light of feeling and thought, a peculiar, an inimitable blending of sweetness and hauteur in his expression and manner, he greeted me calmly, gravely, almost coldly ; yet with so marked an earnestness that I could not help being deeply impressed by it. From that moment until his death we were friends.”

The friendship thus inaugurated between the two poets exercised an undoubted influence upon both of them. In the sympathetic society of Frances Osgood the unfortunate and harassed editor found some nepenthē for his troubles, whilst under his skilful guidance the poetess learned how to produce “a

bolder note" and a more impassioned song. If she now composed with less rapidity than of heretofore, a deeper tone and a more profound pathos is beheld in her later writings, as if the "few additional years, with their inevitable sorrow," which Poe considered "to have stirred the depths of her heart," were, indeed, no poetic fiction. But to the dominating influence of Edgar Poe himself, more than to anything else, must be ascribed the change in Frances Osgood's feelings. In what light she now regarded her poetic Mentor may be best comprehended from these lines to him, published in his own periodical, the *Broadway Journal* :—

To——.

"In Heaven a spirit doth dwell
 'Whose heart-strings are a lute.'"—EDGAR POE.

"I cannot tell *the world* how thrills my heart
 To every touch that flies thy lyre along ;
 How the wild Nature and the wondrous Art,
 Blend into Beauty in thy passionate song—

"But this *I know*—in thine enchanted slumbers,
 Heaven's poet, Israfel—with minstrel fire—
 Taught the music of his own sweet numbers,
 And tuned—to chord with his—thy glorious lyre !"

Well known as is Poe's exquisite response to these lines, it will still bear repetition here :—

To F——s S. O——d.

“Thou wouldst be loved?—then let thy heart
From its present pathway part not!
Being everything which now thou art,
Be nothing which thou art not.
So with the world thy gentle ways,
Thy grace—thy more than beauty—
Shall be an endless theme of praise,
And love—a simple duty.”—EDGAR POE.

Shortly after this reciprocation of sentiments, and the exchange of certain other poems and letters of a similar character, Poe was engaged to write a series of critiques on the “Literati of New York,” for Mr. Godey’s magazine, *The Lady’s Book*, and how Frances Osgood was interested in them will be best gathered from her own pleasant account:—

“It was in his own simple yet poetical home, that to me the character of Edgar Poe appeared in its most beautiful light. Playful, affectionate, witty, alternately docile and wayward as a petted child—for his young, gentle, and idolised wife, and for all who came, he had, even in the midst of his most harassing literary duties, a kind word, a pleasant smile, a graceful and courteous attention. At his desk, beneath the romantic picture of his loved and lost Lenore, he would sit, hour after hour, patient, assiduous, and uncomplaining, tracing in an exquisitely clear chirography, and with almost superhuman swiftness, the lightning thoughts—the ‘rare and radiant’ fancies—as they flashed through his wonderful and ever-wakeful brain. I recollect one morning towards the close of his residence in this city, when he seemed unusually

gay and light-hearted. Virginia, his sweet wife, had written me a pressing invitation to come to them; and I, who never could resist her affectionate summons, and who enjoyed his society far more in his own home than elsewhere, hastened to Amity Street. I found him just completing his series of papers entitled *The Literati of New York*. ‘See,’ said he, displaying, in laughing triumph, several little rolls of narrow paper, ‘I am going to show you, by the difference in length of these, the different degrees of estimation in which I hold all you literary people. In each of these, one of you is rolled up and fully discussed. Come, Virginia, help me!’ And one by one they unfolded them. At last they came to one which seemed interminable. Virginia laughingly ran to one corner of the room with one end, and her husband to the opposite with the other. ‘And whose lengthened sweetness long drawn out is that?’ said I. ‘Hear her!’ he cried, ‘just as if her little vain heart didn’t tell her it’s herself!’”

Subsequently, when requested to furnish her reminiscences of the unfortunate poet, Mrs. Osgood replied:—

“For you, who knew and understood my affectionate interest in him, and my frank acknowledgment of that interest to all who had a claim upon my confidence, for you, I will willingly do so. I think no one could know him—no one *has* known him personally—certainly no woman—without feeling the same interest. I can sincerely say, that although I have frequently *heard* of aberrations on his part from ‘the straight and narrow path,’ I have never *seen* him otherwise than gentle, generous, well-bred, and fastidiously refined. To a sensitive and delicately nurtured woman, there was a peculiar and irresistible charm in the chivalric,

graceful, and almost tender reverence with which he invariably approached all women who won his respect. It was this which first commanded and always retained my regard for him.

"I have been told that when his sorrows and pecuniary embarrassments had driven him to the use of stimulants, which a less delicate organisation might have borne without injury, he was in the habit of speaking disrespectfully of the ladies of his acquaintance. *It is difficult for me to believe this ;* for to *me*, to whom he came during the year of our acquaintance for counsel and kindness in all his many anxieties and griefs, he never spoke irreverently of any woman save one, and then only in *my* defence ; and though I rebuked him for his momentary forgetfulness of the respect due to himself and to me, I could not but forgive the offence for the sake of the generous impulse which prompted it. Yet, even were these sad rumours true of him, the wise and well informed knew how to regard, as they would the impetuous anger of a spoiled infant, balked of its capricious will, the equally harmless and unmeaning phrenzy of that stray child of Poetry and Passion. For the few unwomanly and slander-loving gossips who have injured *him* and *themselves* only by repeating his ravings, when in such moods they have accepted his society, I have only to vouchsafe my wonder and my pity. They cannot surely harm the true and pure, who, reverencing his genius and pitying his misfortunes and his errors, endeavoured, by their timely kindness and sympathy, to soothe his sad career."

Such were the impressions left upon Mrs. Osgood by Edgar Poe, and how she, in her turn, appeared to him is told in these words of the poet. "In character she is ardent, sensitive, impulsive. . . the very soul

of truth and honour; a worshipper of the beautiful, with a heart so radically artless as to seem abundant in art; universally admired, respected, and beloved. In person she is about the medium height, slender even to fragility, graceful whether in action or repose; complexion usually pale, hair black and glossy, eyes a clear, luminous grey, large, and with singular capacity for expression."

Although the personal acquaintance of the two poets lasted only for one year, Mrs. Osgood having to travel for her health's sake, "I maintained a correspondence with Mr. Poe," says the lady, "in accordance with the earnest entreaties of his wife, who imagined that my influence over him had a restraining and beneficial effect. It *had*, as far as this—that having solemnly promised me to give up the use of stimulants, he so firmly respected his promise and me, as never once, during our whole acquaintance, to appear in my presence when in the slightest degree affected by them." "The charming love and confidence that existed between his wife and himself," Mrs. Osgood's testimony has already been cited in corroboration of. It was, she declares, "always delightfully apparent to me, in spite of the many little poetical episodes in which the impassioned romance of his temperament impelled him to indulge; of this I cannot speak too earnestly, too warmly."

But an uncharitable and censorious public, fed by the jealous whisperings of envious men, and, sadder still, of jealous women, chose to regard these "poetical episodes" in another light. One of the victims of the scandals and calumnies accumulated upon the poet's devoted head, was his warm friend and defender, Frances Osgood. Alluding to his epistolary and conversational powers, she had remarked to a correspondent, "His letters were divinely beautiful, and for hours I have listened to him, entranced by strains of pure and almost celestial eloquence such as I have never read or heard elsewhere." By means of this correspondence it was sought to crush, or, at all events, inflict a cruel vengeance upon Poe, for slighted advances and critical contempt. One implacable woman, whose name death and her sex forbid us to mention, chanced to see at Poe's house an open note or letter from Mrs. Osgood, which she assumed to consider called for interference. This same woman, whose own advances to the poet were anything but pleasant, so busied herself that a committee of ladies was actually appointed to call upon Mrs. Osgood, and remonstrate with her upon the imprudence of such a correspondence. In consequence of their representations, the poetess consented that they should act on her behalf and request the return of her letters. The late Margaret Fuller, afterwards Countess D'Ossoli, was, it is understood, one of the ladies who acted upon

this occasion, and a well-known literary lady of New York another, but the acknowledged instigator and "wire puller" of the movement was Mrs. E——, the woman above referred to. The story has been told us thus:—

"The ladies repaired to Fordham, presented their credentials, and made their demand. The poor Raven, driven to desperation, ruffled his plumage, called the fair ambassadors 'busy-bodies,' and added injury to insult by saying that 'Mrs. E—— had better come and look after her *own* letters.' Now this was very indiscreet of him, and *very* reprehensible, and no one knew this better than himself. But you shall hear what he himself says about it in a letter:—'In the heat of passion, stung to madness by her inconceivable perfidy, and by the grossness of the injury which her jealousy prompted her to inflict upon *all of us*—upon both families—I permitted myself to say what I should not have said. I had no sooner uttered the words than I *felt* their dishonour. I felt, too, that although *she* must be damningly conscious of her own baseness, she would still have a right to reproach me for having betrayed, under *any* circumstances, her confidence.

"'Full of these thoughts, and terrified almost to death lest I should again, in a moment of madness, be similarly tempted, I went immediately to my secretary—(when those two ladies went away),—made a package of her letters, addressed them to her, and with my own hands left them at her door. Now you cannot be prepared for the diabolical malignity which followed. Instead of feeling that I had done all I could to repair an unpremeditated wrong; instead of feeling that almost any other person would have retained the letters to

make good (if occasion required), the assertion that I possessed them; instead of this, she urged her brothers and brother-in-law to *demand of me the letters*. The position in which she thus placed me you may imagine. Is it any wonder that I was driven *mad* by the intolerable sense of wrong? . . . You will now comprehend what I mean in saying that the *only* thing which I found it impossible to forgive Mrs. Osgood, was her reception of Mrs. E——."

Such is the account furnished by Poe himself of one of the most deplorable incidents in his life, and one which has been misrepresented, exaggerated, and distorted in a hundred different ways by foes and thoughtless retailers of scandal. The guileless nature of Mrs. Osgood, and the passionate, proud spirit of Poe, rendered both easy prey to craft and calculating cold duplicity. It is satisfactory to learn that, despite the intervention of "busybodies," the two poets remained friendly to the close of their contemporaneously ended careers, and whilst Poe frequently alludes in his correspondence with affectionate interest to Mrs. Osgood, the final poem of that lady's last volume, published just as she died—a few months after Poe—was inscribed to him, and was of him, as "Israfel."*

The poet's literary labours during the early half of 1846, after his relinquishment of the *Broadway Journal*, do not appear to have been either voluminous or valuable. To *Graham's Magazine*, and the *Democratic Review*,

* *Vide* Appendix D.

he contributed a certain quantum of "Marginalia," but his own and his wife's ill health rendered him little able to wield his pen with any of the readiness he had so lately displayed. The settlement of various matters connected with his defunct periodical occupied a considerable portion of his time, and as an example of the honourable manner in which he strove to perform the pecuniary engagements—despite the difficulties under which he laboured—that arose out of his recent publishership, this little note may be cited:—

"NEW YORK, April 16, '46.

"MY DEAR SIR,—You seem to take matters very easily, and I really wonder at your patience under the circumstances. But the truth is, I am in no degree to blame. Your letters, one and all, reached me in due course of mail, and I attended to them *as far as I could*. The business, in fact, was none of mine, but of the person to whom I transferred the Journal, and in whose hands it perished.

"Of course, I feel no less in honour bound to refund you your money, and now do so, with many thanks for your promptness and courtesy.—Very cordially yours,

"EDGAR A. POE."

During the months of February, March, and April, the poet contributed notices of leading American authors to the pages of Godey's *Lady's Book*, and in May commenced in the same magazine a series of critical studies on "The Literati of New York." These essays, which were continued from month to month

until October, were immensely successful, so far as creating a sensation was concerned, but in some respects they greatly injured Poe's prospects, both by enlarging still further the number of his foes, and even by causing the intimidation of the less courageous of his friends, who foresaw and dreaded the decrease of his popularity in many influential places. The causticity of these critiques, indeed, produced a terrible commotion in the ranks of mediocrity, and no effort was left untried to put a stop to their publication. Poe himself was alternately threatened and cajoled, but of course to no purpose; similar efforts were made with Mr. Godey, but with what little success this letter from the Philadelphian publisher will show:—

“The Authors and Mr. Poe.

“June 1846.

“We have received several letters from New York, anonymous and from personal friends, requesting us to be careful what we allow Mr. Poe to say of the New York authors, many of whom are our personal friends. We reply to one and all, that we have nothing to do but publish Mr. Poe's opinions, *not our own*. Whether we agree with Mr. Poe or not, is another matter. *We are not to be intimidated* by a threat of the loss of friends, or turned from our purpose by honeyed words. . . . Many attempts have been made, and are making, by various persons to forestall public opinion. *We have the name of one person*,—others are busy with reports of Mr. Poe's illness. Mr. Poe has been ill, but we have letters from him of very recent dates, also a new batch

of *The Literati*, which show anything but feebleness either of body or mind. Almost every paper that we exchange with has praised our new enterprise, and spoken in high terms of Mr. Poe's opinion."

Highly successful as Poe's "opinions" may have been for the publisher's pocket—and some of the *Lady's Book* issues ran through three editions—the unfortunates of whom they were expressed were scarcely so contented. One of them, duplicately named "Thomas Dunn English" and "Thomas Dunn Brown," dissatisfied with the manner in which his literary shortcomings had been dissected by the critic, or, as Poe suggests, hankering after wider notoriety, obtained the use of the *Evening Mirror* from its new proprietors, Fuller and Company, and inserted therein a grossly personal attack upon the poet, who thereupon instituted a libel suit against the newspaper, and recovered heavy damages for defamation of character. From the so-called "Reply of Mr. English," some of the more relevant paragraphs may be cited, but the "card" is too lengthy and too indecent to be quoted *in extenso*. It was editorially introduced with the plea that "As Mr. Godey, 'for a consideration,' lends the use of his battery for an attack on the one side, it is but fair that we allow our friends an opportunity to exercise a little 'self-defence' on the other." As Poe's critique was purely directed against the literary weaknesses

of "English," the personalities of the "Reply" were utterly uncalled for; it began thus:—

"As I have not, of late, replied to attacks made upon me through the public press, I can easily afford to make an exception, and still keep my rule a general one. A Mr. Edgar A. Poe has been engaged for some time past in giving to the public, through the medium of the *Lady's Book*, sketches of what he facetiously calls the 'Literati of New York.' These he names, by way of distinction, I presume, from his ordinary writings, '*honest* opinions.' He honours me by including me in the very numerous and remarkably august body he affects to describe. . . . As he seems to covet a notice from me, he shall be gratified.

"Mr. Poe states in his article, 'I do not personally know Mr. English.' . . . I know Mr. Poe by a succession of his acts—one of which is rather costly. I hold Mr. Poe's acknowledgment for a sum of money which he obtained of me under false pretences. As I stand in need of it at this time, I am content he should forget to know me, provided he acquits himself of the money he owes me. I ask no interest, in lieu of which I am willing to credit him with the sound cuffing I gave him when I last saw him.

"Another act of his gave me some knowledge of him. A merchant of this city had accused him of committing forgery. He consulted me on the mode of punishing his accuser, and as he was afraid to challenge him to the field, or chastise him personally, I suggested a legal prosecution as his sole remedy. At his request I obtained a counsellor who was willing, as a compliment to me, to conduct his suit without the customary retaining fee. But, though so eager at first to commence proceedings, he dropped the matter altogether when the time

came for him to act—thus virtually admitting the truth of the charge.

“Some time before this, if I mistake not, Mr. Poe accepted an invitation to deliver a poem before a society of the New York University. About a week before the time when this poem was to be pronounced, he called on me, appearing to be much troubled—said he could not write the poem, and begged me to help him out with some idea of the course to pursue. I suggested that he had better write a note to the society, and frankly state his inability to compose a poem on a stated subject. He did not do this, but—*as he always does when troubled*—drank until intoxicated; and remained in a state of intoxication during the week. When the night of exhibition came, it was gravely announced that Mr. Poe could not deliver his poem, on account of severe indisposition!

“His next affair of a similar kind, was still more discreditable. Unmindful of his former act, he accepted an invitation to deliver a poem before a Boston institution—the Lyceum, I think. When I remonstrated with him on undertaking a task he could not perform, he alleged that he was in want of the money they would pay him, and would contrive to ‘cook up something.’ Want of ability prevented him from performing his intention, and he insulted his audience, and rendered himself a laughing-stock, by reciting a mass of ridiculous stuff, written by some one, and printed under his name when he was about eighteen years of age. It had a peculiar effect upon his audience, who dispersed under its infliction; and when he was rebuked for his fraud, he asserted that he had intended a hoax. . . . His lamentation over my lack of a common English education is heart-rending to hear. I will acknowledge my deficiencies with pleasure. It is a great pity that he is not equally candid.

“He really does not possess one tithe of that greatness which he seems to regard as an uncomfortable burden. He mistakes coarse abuse for polished invective, and vulgar insinuation for sly satire. He is not alone thoroughly unprincipled, base, and depraved, but silly, vain, and ignorant,—not alone an assassin in morals, but a quack in literature. His frequent quotations from languages of which he is entirely ignorant, and his consequent blunders, expose him to ridicule; while his cool plagiarisms, from known or forgotten writers, excite the public amazement. He is a complete evidence of his own assertion, that ‘no spectacle can be more pitiable than that of a man without the commonest school education, busying himself in attempts to instruct mankind on topics of polite literature.’”

Mr. English next proceeds to furnish his version of the Mrs. E——’s letters case—alleges a chastisement he had inflicted on Poe was so violent that it had caused the poet’s confinement to his bed for a day or two, and winds up his diatribe by declaring his reviewer “overrates his own powers.”

That any newspaper could be found to insert such a communication in its columns, appears extraordinary, even although the proprietors made no concealment of their hatred for the person attacked, but what was still more lamentable was the fact that Poe, not content to leave to public justice the exoneration of his character from all charges not self-evidently false, foolishly increased the importance of the attack by publishing a refutation of it. The slanders signed

with the name of "English," but generally believed to have been the joint composition of various persons, appeared in the *Evening Mirror* of the 23d of June, and on the 28th inst. Poe's answer appeared in the *Philadelphia Saturday Gazette*. The editor of the latter paper, remarking that, at the "particular request of some of Mr. Poe's friends in this city," he publishes that gentleman's reply to the attack made upon him in the *Mirror*, adding justly, "Mr. English's letter was very severe upon the private character of Mr. Poe, and the latter retaliates in the same spirit. All this is, to our notion, in bad taste, yet we cannot well refuse the assailed an opportunity to exculpate himself."

Of the poet's voluminous *Reply to Mr. English and Others*, only a small portion can possibly be quoted, as the letter, which would fill a small volume, deals not only with "English," but with the "Others." It is dated New York, June 27th, and begins in this wise:—

"*To the Public.*—A long and serious illness of such character as to render quiet and perfect seclusion in the country of vital importance, has hitherto prevented me from seeing an article headed 'The War of the Literati,' signed 'Thomas Dunn English.' . . . This article I might, and should, indeed, *never* have seen, but for the kindness of Mr. Godey, who enclosed it to me with a suggestion that certain portions of it might be thought on my part to demand a reply.

"I had some difficulty in comprehending what *that was*,

said or written by Mr. English, that could be deemed answerable by any human being; but I had not taken into consideration that I had been, for many months, absent and dangerously ill—that I had no longer a journal in which to defend myself—that these facts were well known to Mr. English—that he is a blackguard of the lowest order—that it would be a silly truism, if not unpardonable flattery, to term him either a coward or a liar—and, lastly, that the magnitude of a slander is usually in the direct ratio of the littleness of the slanderer, but, above all things, of the impunity with which he fancies it may be uttered.

“Of the series of papers which have called down upon me, while supposed defenceless, the animadversions of the pensive Fuller, the cultivated Clark, the ‘indignant Briggs,’* and the animalcula with moustaches for antennal, that is in the capital habit of signing itself in full ‘Thomas Dunn English’—of this series of papers all have been long since written, and *three* have been already given to the public. The circulation of the Magazine in which they appear cannot be much less than 50,000, and, admitting but four readers to each copy, I may congratulate myself on a monthly audience of *at least* 200,000 from amongst the most refined and intellectual classes of American society. Of course, it will be difficult on the part of *The Mirror* (I am not sure whether five hundred or six hundred be the precise number of copies it *now* circulates)—difficult, I say, to convince the 200,000 readers in question that, individually and collectively, they are blockheads—that they do not rightly comprehend the unpretending words which I have addressed to them in this series—and that, as for myself, I have no

* Proprietors of the New York *Evening Mirror*, in which the libel appeared.—J. H. I.

other design in the world than misrepresentation, scurrility, and the indulgence of personal spleen. What has been printed is before my readers ; what I have written besides is in the hands of Mr. Godey, and shall remain unaltered. . . . In sketching individuals, every candid reader will admit that, while my general aim has been accuracy, I have yielded to delicacy even a little too much of verisimilitude. Indeed, on this score, should I not have credit for running my pen through certain sentences referring, for example, to the brandy nose of Mr. Briggs (since Mr. Briggs is only one-third described when this nose is omitted), and to the family resemblance between the whole visage of Mr. English and that of the best looking but most unprincipled of Mr. Barnum's baboons ?

"It will not be supposed, from anything here said, that I myself attach any importance to this series of papers. The public, however, is the best judge of its own taste ; and that the spasms of one or two enemies have given the articles a notoriety far surpassing their merit or my expectation, is possibly no fault of mine. In a preface their very narrow scope is defined. They are loosely and inconsiderately written—aiming at nothing beyond the gossip of criticism—unless, indeed, at the relief of those '*necessities*' which I have never blushed to admit, and which the editor of *The Mirror*—the quondam associate of gentlemen—has, in the same manner, never blushed publicly to insult and to record.

"But let me return to Mr. English's attack—and, in so returning, let me not permit any profundity of disgust to induce, even for an instant, a violation of the dignity of truth. What is *not false* amid the scurrility of this man's statements, it is not in my nature to brand as false. . . . The errors and frailties which I deplore, it cannot at least be

asserted that I have been the coward to deny. Never, even, have I made attempt at *extenuating* a weakness which is (or, by the blessing of God, *was*) a calamity, although those who did not know me intimately had little reason to regard it otherwise than as a crime. For, indeed, had my pride, or that of my family, permitted, there was much—very much—there was everything—to be offered in extenuation. Perhaps, even, there was an epoch of which it might not have been wrong in me to hint—what by the testimony of Dr. Francis and other medical men, I might have demonstrated, had the public, indeed, cared for the demonstration—that the irregularities so profoundly lamented were the *effect* of a terrible evil rather than its cause. . . .

“It is not, then, my purpose to deny any part of the conversation represented to have been held *privately* between this person and myself. . . . The *details* of the ‘conversation,’ as asserted, I shall not busy myself in attempting to understand. . . .

“I shall not think it necessary to maintain that I am *no* ‘coward.’ On a point such as this a man should speak only through the acts, moral and physical, of his whole public career. But it is a matter of common observation that your *real* coward never fails to make it a primary point to accuse all his enemies of cowardice. . . . Now, the origin of the nickname, ‘Thomas Done Brown,’ is, in Philadelphia, quite as thoroughly understood as Mr. English could desire. With even the inconceivable amount of brass in his possession, I doubt if he *could*, in that city, pronounce aloud that simple word ‘coward,’ if his most saintly soul depended upon the issue. . . .

“His primary thrashing, of any note, was bestowed upon him, I believe, by Mr. John S. Du Solle, the editor of the

82 *The Editorial Labour of Mr. English.*

Spirit of the Times, who could not very well get over acting with this indecorum, on account of Mr. E.'s amiable weakness—a propensity for violating the privacy of a publisher's MSS. I have not heard that there was any resentment on the part of Mr. English."

A record of several other chastisements inflicted by various known and named individuals on Mr. English's person follows, and then the poet proceeds to deal *seriatim* with the charges against himself:—

"About the one or two other *unimportant* points in this gentleman's attack upon myself, there is, I believe, very little to be said. He asserts that I have complimented his literary performances. . . . I solemnly say that in no paper of mine did there ever appear one word about this gentleman—unless of the broadest and most unmistakable irony—that was not printed from the MS. of the gentleman himself. The last number of the *Broadway Journal* (the work having been turned over by me to another publisher) was edited by Mr. English. The editorial portion was wholly his, and was one interminable pæan of his own praises. The truth of all this—if any one is weak enough to care a penny about *who* praises or who damns Mr. English—will no doubt be corroborated by Mr. Jennings, the printer.

"I am charged, too, unspecifically, with being a plagiarist on a very extensive scale. He who accuses another of what all the world knows to be *especially* false, is merely rendering the accused a service by calling attention to the *converse* of the fact, and should never be helped out of his ridiculous position by any denial on the part of the accused. We want a magazine paper on 'The Philosophy of Billingsgate.' But

I am really ashamed of indulging even in a sneer at this poor miserable fool, on any mere topic of literature alone.

“As a matter of course I should have been satisfied to follow the good example of Mr. Wise,* when insulted by Mr. English (if this be, indeed, the person’s name), had there been nothing more serious in the blatherskite’s attack than the particulars to which I have hitherto alluded. The two passages which follow, however, are to be found in the article referred to:—

‘I hold Mr. Poe’s acknowledgment for a sum of money which he obtained from me under false pretences.’

And again:—

‘A merchant of this city,’ &c. (*vide* paragraph ending, ‘thus virtually admitting the truth of the charge,’ page 75).

“It will be admitted by the most patient that these accusations are of such a character as to justify me in rebutting them in the most public manner possible, even when they are found to be urged by a Thomas Dunn English. The charges are criminal, and, with the aid of the *Mirror*, I can have them investigated before a criminal tribunal. In the meantime, I must not lie under these imputations a moment longer than necessary. To the first charge I reply, then, simply that Mr. English is indebted *to me* in what (to me) is a considerable sum—that I owe him nothing—that in the assertion that he holds my acknowledgment for a sum of money under *any* pretence obtained, he lies—and that I defy him to produce such acknowledgment.

“In regard to the second charge, I must necessarily be a little more explicit. ‘The merchant of New York’ alluded to, is a gentleman of high respectability—Mr. Edward J.

* The Hon. Henry A. Wise, then United States Minister to France, who entirely ignored his libeller.—J. H. L.

Thomas, of Broad Street. I have now the honour of his acquaintance, but some time previous to this acquaintance, he had remarked to a common friend that he had heard whispered against me an accusation of forgery. The friend, as in duty bound, reported this matter to me. I called at once on Mr. Thomas, who gave me no very thorough explanation, but promised to make inquiry, and confer with me hereafter. Not hearing from him in what I thought due time, however, I sent him (unfortunately by Mr. English, who was always in my office for the purpose of doing himself honour in running my errands) a note, of which the following is a copy :—

‘OFFICE OF THE *Broadway Journal*, &c.

‘EDWARD J. THOMAS, ESQ.

‘SIR,—As I have not had the pleasure of hearing from you since our interview at your office, may I ask of you to state to me distinctly, whether I am to consider the charge of *forgery* urged by you against myself, in the presence of a common friend, as originating with yourself or Mr. Benjamin?—Your obedient servant,

‘(Signed) EDGAR A. POE.’

“The reply brought me was verbal and somewhat vague. As usual my messenger had played the bully, and, as *very* usual, had been treated with contempt. The idea of *challenging* a man for a charge of *forgery* could only have entered the head of an owl or an English: of course I had no resource but in a suit which one of Mr. E.’s friends offered to conduct for me. I left town to procure evidence, and on my return found at my house a letter from Mr. Thomas. It ran thus :—

'NEW YORK, July 5, 1845.

'E. A. POE, ESQ., NEW YORK.

'DEAR SIR:—I had hoped ere this to have seen you, but as you have not called, and as I may soon be out of the city, I desire to say to you that, after repeated efforts, I saw the person, on Friday evening last, from whom the report originated to which you referred in your call at my office. He denies it *in toto*—says he does *not know it* and never said so—and it undoubtedly arose from the misunderstanding of some word used. It gives me pleasure thus to trace it, and still more to find it destitute of foundation in truth, as I thought would be the case. I have told Mr. Benjamin the result of my inquiries, and shall do so to ——* by a very early opportunity—the only two persons who know anything of the matter, as far as I know.—I am, Sir, very truly your friend and obedient servant,

'(Signed) EDWARD J. THOMAS.'

"Now, as this note was most satisfactory and most kind—as I neither wished nor could have accepted Mr. Thomas' money—as the motives which had actuated him did not seem to me malevolent—as I had heard him spoken of in the most flattering manner by one whom, above all others, I most profoundly respect and esteem—it does really appear to me hard to comprehend how even so malignant a villain as this English could have wished me to proceed with the suit.

"In the presence of witnesses I handed him the letter, and requested his opinion. In lieu of it he gave me his advice: *it was that I should deny having received such a letter and urge the prosecution to extremity.* I promptly ordered him to quit the house. In his capacity of hound, he obeyed.

* The person referred to here was Mrs. Osgood.—J. H. I.

"These are the facts which, in a court of justice, I propose to demonstrate; and, having demonstrated them, shall I not have a right to demand of a generous public that it brand with eternal infamy that wretch, who, with a full knowledge of my exculpation from so heinous a charge, has not been ashamed to take advantage of my supposed inability to defend myself, for the purpose of stigmatising me as a felon?

"And of the gentleman who (also with a thorough knowledge of the facts, as I can and will show) prostituted his sheets to the circulation of this calumny—of *him* what is it necessary to say? At present—nothing. . . . Not even in taking vengeance on a Fuller can I stoop to become a Fuller myself. . . .

EDGAR A. POE."

This rejoinder appears to have been the most foolish act of Poe's life; for it was as difficult for him, as for any one else, to descend into the arena and combat blackguards with any other than their own weapons. To a friend who remonstrated with him, however, on the manner of the above communication, he wrote:—

"I do not well see how I could have otherwise replied to English. You must know him (English) before you can well estimate my reply. He is so thorough a 'blatherskite' that to have replied to him with *dignity* would have been the extreme of the ludicrous. The only true plan—not to have answered him at all—was precluded on account of the nature of some of his accusations—forgery, for instance. To such charges, even from the Autocrat of all the Asses, a man is *compelled* to answer. There he had me. Answer him I must. But how? Believe me, there exists no such dilemma

as that in which a gentleman is placed when he is forced to reply to a blackguard. If he have any genius, then is the time for its display. I confess to you that I rather *like* that reply of mine, in a literary sense; and so do a great many of my friends. It fully answered its purpose, beyond a doubt. Would to Heaven every work of Art did as much! You err in supposing me to have been 'peevish' when I wrote the reply. The peevishness was all 'put on' as a part of my argument—of my plan; so was the 'indignation' with which I wound up. *How* could I be either peevish or indignant about a matter so well adapted to further my purposes? Were I able to afford so expensive a luxury as personal—especially, as *refutable*—abuse, I would willingly pay any man \$2000 per annum to hammer away at me all the year round."

And, in another letter to the same correspondent, Poe, referring to the action for libel he had successfully carried out against the New York publisher of the slanders, says of English:—

"The vagabond, at the period of the suit's coming on, ran off to Washington, for fear of being criminally prosecuted. The 'acknowledgment' referred to was not forthcoming, and the *Mirror* could not get a *single witness* to testify *one word* against my character. . . . My suit against the *Mirror* was terminated by a verdict of \$225 in my favour. The costs and all will make them a bill of \$492. Pretty well—considering that there was *no* actual 'damage' done to me."

Early in the summer of 1846 Poe removed from Amity Street, New York, to Fordham, Westchester County, at that time quite out in the country, but

now become almost a suburb of the city. His darling wife's health was rapidly failing, and it was, Mrs. Whitman remarks, "for her dear sake, and for the recovery of that peace which had been so fatally perilled amid the irritations and anxieties of his New York life, that Poe left the city and removed to the little Dutch cottage in Fordham, where he passed the three remaining years of his life. It was to this quiet haven in the beautiful spring or early summer of 1846, when the fruit-trees were all in bloom and the grass in its freshest verdure, that he brought his Virginia to die."

His literary engagements occasionally called the poet to New York, but in such cases it was usual for his mother-in-law, Mrs. Clemm, to accompany him. Once, soon after the removal to Fordham, being detained all night in town, he sent the following tender lines to his wife, to reassure her. As the note—written on a rough page of his pocket-book—is the only one known to have been addressed by Poe to his wife, it is deserving citation :—

"June 12, 1846.

"MY DEAR HEART—MY DEAR VIRGINIA—Our mother will explain to you why I stay away from you this night. I trust the interview I am promised will result in some *substantial good* for me—for your dear sake and hers—keep up your heart in all hopefulness, and trust yet a little longer. On my last great disappointment I should have lost my

courage *but for you*—my little darling wife. You are my *greatest* and *only* stimulus now, to battle with this uncongenial, unsatisfactory, and ungrateful life.

"I shall be with you to-morrow (illegible) P.M., and be assured until I see you I will keep in *loving remembrance* your *last words*, and your fervent prayer !

"Sleep well, and may God grant you a peaceful summer with your devoted
EDGAR."

What was the promised good, and whether the promise was fulfilled, are unknown. During the sad summer months the poet alternately occupied his time, when anxiety about his wife permitted him to work, in writing out his pithy "Marginalia" for *Graham's Magazine* and the *Democratic Review*, and the "Literati" for the *Lady's Book*, and in beautifying the green sward about his little cottage—"the sweetest little cottage imaginable," says Mrs. Clemm ; adding :—

"Oh, how supremely happy we were in our dear cottage home ! We three lived only for each other. Eddie rarely left his beautiful home. I attended to his literary business, for he, poor fellow, knew nothing about money transactions. How should he, brought up in luxury and extravagance ?

"He passed the greater part of the morning in his study, and, after he had finished his task for the day, he worked in our beautiful flower garden, or read and recited poetry to us. Every one who knew him *intimately* loved him. Judges pronounced him the best conversationalist *living*. We had very little society except among the *literati*, but this was exceedingly pleasant."*

* To Judge Neilson Poe. August 19th, 1860.

Among the literary friends who visited the Poes at their pleasant country home was Mrs. Gove-Nichols. Of her first excursion to Fordham, she records :—

“ I found the poet, and his wife, and his wife’s mother—who was his aunt—living in a little cottage at the top of a hill. There was an acre or two of green sward, fenced in about the house, as smooth as velvet and as clean as the best kept carpet.* There were some grand old cherry-trees in the yard, that threw a massive shade around them. The house had three rooms—a kitchen, a sitting-room, and ‘a bed-chamber over the sitting-room.† There was a piazza in front of the house that was a lovely place to sit in in summer, with the shade of cherry-trees before it. There was no cultivation, no flowers—nothing but the smooth green sward and the majestic trees.

“ On the occasion of this, my first, visit to the poet, I was a good deal plagued—Poe had somehow caught a full-grown bob-o’-link. He had put him in a cage, which he had hung on a nail driven into the trunk of a cherry-tree. The poor bird was as unfit to live in a cage as his captor was to live in the world. He was as restless as his jailer, and sprang continually, in a fierce, frightened way, from one side of the cage to the other. I pitied him, but Poe was bent on taming him. There he stood with his arms crossed before the imprisoned bird, his sublime trust in attaining the impossible apparent in his whole self. So handsome, so impassive in his wonderful intellectual beauty, so proud and so reserved, and yet so confidentially communicative, so entirely a gentleman

* Compare with description of grass in “Domain of Arnheim” and “Londor’s Cottage.”—J. H. I.

† This is a mistake ; there were, and still are, two rooms on each floor.—J. H. I.

upon all occasions that I ever saw him—so tasteful, so good a talker was Poe, that he impressed himself and his wishes, even without words, upon those with whom he spoke. However, I remonstrated against the imprisonment of ‘Robert of Lincoln Green.’

“‘You are wrong,’ said he quietly, ‘in wishing me to free the bird. He is a splendid songster, and as soon as he is tamed he will delight our home with his musical gifts. You should hear him ring out like a chime of joy-bells his wonderful song.’

“Poe’s voice was melody itself. He always spoke low, when in a violent discussion, compelling his hearers to listen if they would know his opinion, his facts, fancies, or philosophy, or his weird imaginings. These last usually flowed from his pen, seldom from his tongue.

“On this occasion I was introduced to the young wife of the poet, and to the mother, then more than sixty years of age. She was a tall, dignified old lady, with a most lady-like manner, and her black dress, though old and much worn, looked really elegant on her. She wore a widow’s cap, of the genuine pattern, and it suited excellently with her snow-white hair. Her features were large, and corresponded with her stature, and it seemed strange how such a stalwart and queenly woman could be the mother of her *petite* daughter. Mrs. Poe looked very young; she had large black eyes, and a pearly whiteness of complexion, which was a perfect pallor. Her pale face, her brilliant eyes, and her raven hair, gave her an unearthly look. One felt that she was almost a dissolved spirit, and when she coughed it was made certain that she was rapidly passing away.

“The mother seemed hale and strong, and appeared to be a sort of universal Providence for her strange children.

"The cottage had an air of taste and gentility that must have been lent to it by the presence of its inmates. So neat, so poor, so unfurnished, and yet so charming, a dwelling I never saw. The floor of the kitchen was white as wheaten flour. A table, a chair, and a little stove that it contained, seemed to furnish it completely. The sitting-room floor was laid with check matting; four chairs, a light stand, and a hanging book-shelf, composed its furniture. There were pretty presentation copies of books on the little shelves, and the Brownings had posts of honour on the stand. With quiet exultation Poe drew from his side-pocket a letter he had recently received from Elizabeth Barrett (Browning). He read it to us. It was very flattering. She told Poe that his 'poem of the Raven had awakened a fit of horror in England.'* This was what he loved to do. To make the flesh creep, to make one shudder and freeze with horror, was more to his relish (I cannot say more to his mind or heart) than to touch the tenderest chords of sympathy or sadness.

"On the book-shelf there lay a volume of Poe's poems. He took it down, wrote my name in it, and gave it to me. I think he did this from a feeling of sympathy, for I could not be of advantage to him, as my two companions could.† I had sent him an article when he edited the *Broadway Journal*, which had pleased him. It was a sort of wonder article, and he published it without knowing the authorship, and he was pleased to find his anonymous contributor in me. He was at this time greatly depressed. Their extreme

* "A fit horror," *vide* vol. i. p. 274.

† A reviewer one; "the other, a person who wrote laudatory notices of books, and borrowed money or favours from their flattered authors afterwards."—J. H. I.

poverty, the sickness of his wife, and his own inability to write, sufficiently accounted for this. We spent half an hour in the house, when some more company came, which included ladies, and then we all went out for a walk.

"We strolled away into the woods, and had a very cheerful time, till some one proposed a game at leaping. I think it must have been Poe, as he was expert in the exercise. Two or three gentlemen agreed to leap with him, and although one of them was tall, and had been a hunter in times past, Poe still distanced them all. But, alas! his gaiters (*i.e.*, gaiter-shoes), long worn and carefully kept, were both burst in the grand leap that made him victor. I had pitied the poor bob-o'-link in his hard and hopeless imprisonment, but I pitied poor Poe more now. I was certain he had no other shoes, boots, or gaiters. Who among us could offer him money to buy another pair? If any one had money, who had the effrontery to offer it to the poet? When we reached the cottage, I think all felt that we must not go in, to see the shoeless unfortunate sitting or standing in our midst. I had an errand, however; I had left the volume of Poe's poems, and I entered the house to get it. The poor old mother looked at his feet, with a dismay that I shall never forget.

"'O Eddie!' said she, 'how *did* you burst your gaiters?'

"Poe seemed to have fallen into a semi-torpid state as soon as he saw his mother. . . .

"I related the cause of the mishap, and she drew me into the kitchen.

"'Will you speak to Mr. —' (the reviewer), she said, 'about Eddie's last poem?'

"'If he will only take the poem, Eddie can have a pair

of shoes. He has it—I carried it last week, and Eddie says it is his best. You will speak to him about it, *won't you?*

“We had already read the poem in conclave, and, Heaven forgive us, we could not make head or tail of it. It might as well have been in any of the lost languages, for any meaning we could extract from its melodious numbers. I remember saying that I believed it was only a hoax that Poe was passing off for poetry, to see how far his name would go in imposing upon people. But here was a situation. The reviewer had been actively instrumental in the demolition of the gaiters.

“‘Of course they will publish the poem,’ said I, ‘and I will ask C—— to be quick about it.’

“The poem was paid for at once, and published soon after. I presume it is regarded as genuine poetry in the collected poems of its author, but then it brought the poet a pair of gaiters and twelve shillings over.”

Upon Mrs. Gove-Nichols’ next visit to Fordham, the poet became very confidential with her:—

“‘I write,’ he said, ‘from a mental necessity—to satisfy my taste and my love of art. Fame forms no motive power with me. What can I care for the judgment of a multitude, every individual of which I despise?’

“‘But, Mr. Poe,’ said I, ‘there are individuals whose judgment you respect.’

“‘Certainly, and I would choose to have their esteem unmixed with the mean adulation of the mob.’

“‘But the multitude may be honestly and legitimately pleased,’ said I.

“‘That may be *possible*,’ said Poe, musingly, ‘because

they may have an honest and legitimate leader, and not a poor man who has been paid a hundred dollars to manufacture opinions for them and fame for an author.'

" 'Do reviewers sell their literary conscience thus unconscionably ?' said I.

" 'A literary critic must be loth to violate his taste, his sense of the fit and the beautiful. To sin against these and praise an unworthy author, is to him an unpardonable sin. But if he were placed on the rack, or if one he loved better than his own life were writhing there, I can conceive of his forging a note against the Bank of Fame, in favour of some would-be poet, who is able and willing to buy his poems and his opinions.'

" He turned almost fiercely upon me, his fine eyes piercing me. 'Would you blame a man for not allowing his sick wife to starve ?' said he.

" I changed the subject, and he became quiet, and we walked along, noting beauties of flowers and foliage, of hill and dale, 'till we reached the cottage.'

" At my next visit," resumes Mrs. Gove-Nichols, "Poe said, as we walked along the brow of the hill, 'I can't look out on this loveliness till I have made a confession to you. I said to you, when you were last here, that I despised Fame.'

" 'I remember,' said I.

" 'It was false,' said he ; 'I love Fame. I dote on it ; I idolise it ; I would drink to the very dregs the glorious intoxication. I would have incense ascend in my honour from every hill and hamlet, from every town and city on this earth. Fame ! glory ! they are life-giving breath and living blood. No man lives unless he is famous ! How bitterly I belied my nature, and my aspirations, when I said I did not desire fame, and that I despised it.'

"I suggested that the utterance on both occasions might be true to the mood that suggested them. But he declared that there was no truth in his first assertion. I was not as severe with him as he was with himself."

The summer months flew by, taking with them the strength of his beloved young wife, and unnerving and unfitting the poet for all literary exertion. He was unable to work, and, even if he had been able, the but too successful career of his "Literati" sketches had caused many magazines, edited by the reviewed or their allies, to close their pages to him. The dangerous censorship he had assumed in this series, says Mrs. Whitman, "exposed him to frequent indignant criticism, while, by his personal errors and indiscretions, he drew upon himself much social censure and *espionage*, and became the victim of dishonouring accusations from which honour itself had forbidden him to exculpate himself." The worse his wife became, the less able became the poet to labour with his pen, so that the situation of the family grew more deplorable daily. The dreary months dragged along, and no help appeared. "The autumn came, and Mrs. Poe sank rapidly in consumption," resumes the narrative of Mrs. Gove-Nichols.

"I saw her in her bed chamber," she relates. "Everything here was so neat, so purely clean, so scant and poverty-stricken, that I saw the poor sufferer with such a heart-ache

... There was no clothing on the bed, which was only straw, but a snow-white counterpane and sheets. The weather was cold, and the sick lady had the dreadful chills that accompany the hectic fever of consumption. She lay on the straw bed, wrapped in her husband's greatcoat, with a large tortoiseshell cat in her bosom. The wonderful cat seemed conscious of her great usefulness. The coat and the cat were the sufferer's only means of warmth, except as her husband held her hands, and her mother her feet.

"Mrs. Clemm was passionately fond of her daughter, and her distress on account of her illness and poverty and misery was dreadful to see.

"As soon as I was made aware of these painful facts, I came to New York and enlisted the sympathies and services of a lady, whose heart and hand were ever open to the poor and miserable. A feather bed and abundance of bed clothing and other comforts were the first-fruits of my labour of love. The lady headed a private subscription, and carried them sixty dollars the next week. From the day this kind lady first saw the suffering family of the poet, she watched over them as a mother watches over her babe. She saw them often, and ministered to the comfort of the dying and the living."

Mrs. Shew (afterwards Houghton), the lady whose unostentatious sympathy Mrs. Nichols had so happily invoked, knew nothing of the poet or his family, save that they were helpless and needed aid; but that was all that was necessary to call forth her friendly services.

CHAPTER XVII.

MARIE LOUISE SHEW.

THE facts of Poe's poverty, illness, and inability to write soon became public property. One consequence of these circumstances being published was the outbreak in the papers of an epidemic of literary and personal abuse of the unprotected poet. In another instance, an implacable woman, still smarting under a hastily-uttered and bitterly-repentent remark of Poe's,* actually tortured his dying wife by sending her some of the scurrilous attacks on her unfortunate husband, and by so doing, so the poet firmly believed, shortened her life. But there was a bright side to this too gloomy picture. Commenting upon a paragraph in the columns of a daily contemporary that, without Poe's knowledge or connivance, had brought the poor proud poet's unhappy circumstances before the world, N. P. Willis made an appeal to the public on his friend's behalf. In this article, which appeared in the *Home Journal*, he took the opportunity of suggest-

* *Vide*, p. 69, vol. ii.

ing that the poet's case was a strong argument in favour of founding an hospital for well-educated persons in reduced circumstances. Some of Willis's remarks are worth repetition, although it is to be believed that, at the time, they had little other effect than making Poe's misery still more notorious. He said :—

“The feeling we have long entertained on this subject has been freshened by a recent paragraph in the *Express*, announcing that Mr. Edgar Allan Poe and his wife were both dangerously ill, and suffering for want of the common necessaries of life. Here is one of the finest scholars, one of the most original men of genius, and one of the most industrious of the literary profession of our country, whose temporary suspension of labour, from bodily illness, drops him immediately to a level with the common objects of public charity. There is no intermediate, stopping-place — no respectful shelter where, with the delicacy due to genius and culture, he might secure aid, unadvertised, till, with returning health, he could resume his labours and his unmortified sense of independence. He must either apply to individual friends—(a resource to which death is sometimes almost preferable)—or *suffer down* to the level where Charity receives claimants, but where Rags and Humiliation are the only recognised Ushers to her presence. Is this right? Should there not be, in all highly-civilised communities, an institution designed expressly for educated and refined objects of charity—a hospital, a retreat, a home of seclusion and comfort, the sufficient claims to which would be such susceptibilities as are violated by the above-mentioned appeal in a daily paper?”

This suggestive article of Willis speedily reached Poe's hands. He was intensely horrified at having his private matters thus thrust before the public, and immediately sent the following letter to the editor of the *Home Journal*, in which publication it appeared, within a week after the article that had called it forth :—

“MY DEAR WILLIS,—The paragraph which has been put in circulation respecting my wife's illness, my own, my poverty, &c., is now lying before me ; together with the beautiful lines by Mrs. Locke and those by Mrs. —, to which the paragraph has given rise, as well as your kind and manly comments in the *Home Journal*.

“The motive of the paragraph I leave to the conscience of him or her who wrote it or suggested it. Since the thing is done, however, and since the concerns of my family are thus pitilessly thrust before the public, I perceive no mode of escape from a public statement of what is true and what is erroneous in the report alluded to.

“That my wife is ill, then, is true ; and you may imagine with what feelings I add that this illness, hopeless from the first, has been heightened and precipitated by the reception, at two different periods, of anonymous letters—one enclosing the paragraph now in question ; the other, those published calumnies of Messrs. —, for which I yet hope to find redress in a court of justice. *

“Of the facts, that I myself have been long and danger-

* The libel suit against the *Evening Mirror* had not yet commenced.—J. H. I.

ously ill, and that my illness has been a well understood thing among my brethren of the press, the best evidence is afforded by the innumerable paragraphs of personal and of literary abuse with which I have been latterly assailed. This matter, however, will remedy itself. At the very first blush of my new prosperity, the gentlemen who toadied me in the old will recollect themselves and toady me again. You, who know me, will comprehend that I speak of these things only as having served, in a measure, to lighten the gloom of unhappiness, by a gentle and not unpleasant sentiment of mingled pity, merriment, and contempt.

"That, as the inevitable consequence of so long an illness, I have been in want of money, it would be folly in me to deny—but that I have ever materially suffered from privation, beyond the extent of my capacity for suffering, is not altogether true. That I am 'without friends' is a gross calumny, which I am sure *you* never could have believed, and which a thousand noble-hearted men would have good right never to forgive me for permitting to pass unnoticed and undenied. Even in the city of New York I could have no difficulty in naming a hundred persons, to each of whom—when the hour for speaking had arrived—I could and would have applied for aid and with unbounded confidence, and with absolutely *no* sense of humiliation.

"I do not think, my dear Willis, that there is any need of my saying more. I am getting better, and may add—if it be any comfort to my enemies—that I have little fear of getting worse. The truth is, I have a great deal to do; and I have made up my mind not to die till it is done.—Sincerely yours,

"EDGAR A. POE.

"December 30th, 1846."

Whilst the paragraph which invoked this protest

from the proud, unfortunate, poet, was running the usual newspaper rounds—during all those dreadful days whilst his wife’s life was ebbing so rapidly—Poe himself was ill, and utterly unable to write anything but the most urgent and imperative letters, such as the above. The few papers of his which were published during this sad interval, as, for instance, the “*Marginalia*,” had been completed and sold several months before publication to the respective magazines, as, indeed, appears to have been the fate pretty generally of all his later articles. The last of the “*Literati*” was issued in the October number of the *Lady’s Book*, and “*The Cask of Amontillado*,” a tale of deep-studied, implacable revenge, was the poet’s contribution for November to that magazine.

It was Poe’s intention—an intention he never lived to carry out—to republish the critical sketches from the *Lady’s Book*, but greatly revised, in book form, as:—

THE LITERATI:

Some honest opinions about

AUTORIAL MERITS AND DEMERITS,

with

OCCASIONAL WORDS OF PERSONALITY.

Together with

MARGINALIA, SUGGESTIONS, AND ESSAYS,

by

EDGAR A. POE.

"If I have in any point receded from what is commonly received, it hath been for the purpose of proceeding *melius* and not *in aliud*." —Lord Bacon.

"Truth, peradventure, by force, may for a time be trodden down, but never, by any means, whatsoever, can it be trodden out." —Lord Coke.

In an extremely interesting letter which Poe wrote on the 15th of December, to a rare and valued correspondent, he thus, amongst other matters, alludes to some of these literary projects:—

"MY DEAR —,—By way of beginning this letter, let me say a word or two of apology for not having sooner replied to your letters of June 9th and October 13th. For more than six months I have been ill—for the greater part of that time, dangerously so, and quite unable to write even an ordinary letter. My magazine papers appearing in this interval were all in the publisher's hands before I was taken sick. Since getting better, I have been, as a matter of course, overwhelmed with the business accumulating during my illness.

"It always gives me true pleasure to hear from you, and I wish you could spare time to write me more frequently. I am gratified by your good opinion of my writings, because what you say evinces the keenest discrimination. Ten times the praise you bestow on me would not please me half so much, were it not for the intermingled scraps of censure, or of objection, which show me that you well know what you are talking about. . . .

"Let me now advert to the points of your two last letters:—

"The criticism on Rogers is not mine—although, when it appeared, I observed a similarity to my ordinary manner.

"The notice of Lowell's 'Brittany' is mine. You will see that it was merely a preparatory notice—I had designed repeating it in full, but something prevented me.

"The criticism on Shelley is *not* mine; is the work of Parke Godwin. I never saw it.

"The critic alluded to by Willis as connected with the *Mirror*, and as having found a parallel between Hood and Aldrich, is myself. See my reply to 'Outis,' in the early numbers of the *Broadway Journal*.

"My reference to L. G. Clark, in spirit but not in letter, is what you suppose. He *abused* me in his criticism—but so feebly—with such a parade of intention and effort, but with so little effect or power, that I—forgave him:—that is to say, I had little difficulty in pardoning him. His strong point was that I ought to write well, because I had asserted that others wrote ill; and that I *didn't* write well, because, although there had been a great deal of fuss made about me, I had written so little—only a small volume of a hundred pages. Why, he had written more himself!

"You will see that I have discontinued the 'Literati' in Godey's Mag.* I was forced to do so, because I found that people insisted on considering them elaborate criticisms, when I had no other design than critical *gossip*. The unexpected circulation of the series, also, suggested to me that I might make a hit and some profit, as well as proper fame, by extending the plan into that of a *book* on American Letters generally, and keeping the publication in my own hands. I am now *at* this—body and soul.† I intend to be thorough—as far as I can—to examine analytically, without reference to

* *The Lady's Book*.

† *Vide* title-page, p. 102.

previous opinions by *anybody*—all the salient points of Literature in general—*e.g.*, Poetry, The Drama, Criticism, Historical Writing, Versification, &c. &c. You may get an idea of the manner in which I propose to write the whole book, by reading the notice of Hawthorne which will appear in the January 'Godey,'* as well as the article on 'The Rationale of Verse,' which will be out in the March or April No. of Colton's American Magazine or Review. †

"Do not trust, in making up your library, to the 'opinions' in the Godey series. I *meant* 'honest'—but my meaning is not so fully made out as I could wish. I thought too little of the series myself to guard sufficiently against haste, inaccuracy, or prejudice. The book will be *true*—according to the best of my abilities.

"As regards Dana, it *is* more than possible that I may be doing him wrong. I have not read him since I was a boy, and must read him carefully again. The Frogpondians have badgered me so much that I fear I am apt to fall into prejudices about them. I have used some of their Pundits up, at all events, in 'The Rationale of Verse.' I will mail you the number as soon as it appears—for I really wish you to tell me what you think of it.

"As regards 'The Stylus'—that is the grand purpose of my life, from which I have never swerved for a moment. But I cannot afford to risk anything by precipitancy—and I *can* afford to wait—at least, until I finish *the book*.‡ When

* Did not appear until June 1847, and then as "Tale-Writing: Hawthorne."—J. H. I.

† Appeared in the *Southern Literary Messenger*, October and November 1848.—J. H. I.

‡ The MS. of this work disappeared after Poe's death; all his papers, that had been left in charge of Mrs. Clemm, passed into the possession of Mr. Griswold.—J. H. I.

that is out, I will start the Mag.—and then I will pay you a visit. . . . In the meantime, let me thank you heartily for your name as a subscriber. . . . Truly, your friend,

“EDGAR A. POE.”

The over sanguine ideas of the poet, as to the speedy publication of his accepted articles, were rarely realised when he had not the editorial charge of a magazine; and many of his troubles arose from having, often unavoidably, to rely upon such fragile expectations. All literary and pecuniary difficulties, however, were now, for the time, disregarded in the imminent nearness of his life's crowning sorrow. The long-dreaded, oft-postponed, final parting with his weary heart's treasure was nigh at hand. The sympathy of many, the more than sisterly affection of one, soothed and sustained Virginia's last days, but her approaching dissolution could not be deferred by any amount of skill or tenderness. Mrs. Shew was the guardian angel who watched over the hapless household, and the deep gratitude with which she inspired Poe, and his dear ones, may be gleaned best from this little note:—

“KINDEST—DEAREST FRIEND,—My poor Virginia still lives, although failing fast and now suffering much pain. May God grant her life until she sees you and thanks you once again! Her bosom is full to overflowing—like my own—with a boundless—inexpressible gratitude to you. Lest she

kindest - dearest friend - My poor Virginia
 still lives, although failing fast and now
 suffering much pain. May God grant her life
 until she sees you and thanks you once again!
 Her bosom is full to overflowing - like my own -
 with a boundless - inexpressible gratitude to you.
 Lest she may never see you more - she bids me
 say that she sends you her sweetest kiss of love
 and will die blessing you. But come - oh come
 to-morrow! Yes, I will be calm - everything
 you so nobly wish to see me. My mother sends
 you, also, her "warmest love and thanks" She
 begs me to ask you, if possible, to make arrange-
 ments at home so that you may stay with us
 tomorrow night. I enclose the order to the
 Postmaster.

Heaven bless you and farewell

Edgar Poe.

Fordham,

Jan. 29. 47.

may never see you more—she bids me say that she sends you her sweetest kiss of love and will die blessing you. But come—oh come to-morrow! Yes, I *will* be calm—everything you so nobly wish to see me. My mother sends you, also, her ‘warmest love and thanks.’ She begs me to ask you, if possible, to make arrangements at home so that you may stay with us to-morrow night. I enclose the order to the Postmaster.

“Heaven bless you and farewell.

“EDGAR A. POE.

“FORDHAM, Jan. 29. 47.”

The very day these lines were written Mrs. Shew called at the cottage, but soon afterwards left it, in order to see after certain comforts for the sick wife. When bidding Mrs. Shew good-bye, the invalid took from her pillow a portrait of her husband and presented it to her kind friend,* together with a little jewel-case that had belonged to the poet’s mother, and which he had preserved religiously through all his troubles. She also asked Mrs. Shew to read an old worn letter, and the fragment of another, from the second wife of Poe’s adoptive father, Mr. Allan, which she, Virginia, had carefully preserved, as the means of exonerating her husband from the responsibility of having caused dissension in his godfather’s home.

Another day, and the poet was wifeless. . . .

For the dear sake of her who was no more—for the

* Subsequently stolen from Mrs. Shew.—J. H. I.

sake of "the one *he* loved so dearly"—the poor heart-broken man kept his promise, and bore up bravely until after his youthful bride had been borne to her sepulchre.

The last days of the poet's wife had been soothed by Mrs. Shew, and the final care of the dead lady's remains was undertaken by that same friend.

"Mrs. Shew was so good to her," said Mrs. Clemm. "She tended her while she lived, as if she had been her dear sister, and when she was dead she dressed her for the grave in beautiful linen. If it had not been for her, my darling Virginia would have been laid in her grave in cotton. I can never tell my gratitude that my darling was entombed in lovely linen."

"It seemed to soothe the mother's sorrow in a wonderful way," remarks Mrs. Gove-Nichols, "that her daughter had been buried in fine linen. How this delicate raiment could add so much to her happiness, I was not able to see, but so it was."

It is recorded that the day of the funeral was a desolate, dreary day—"the skies they were ashen and sober"—and the bereaved husband was forced to assume his old military cloak, which Mrs. Shew had been at pains to hide out of sight, fearing the memories it must arouse, it having, erstwhile, and in the days of their greatest tribulation, served as a covering for Virginia's bed. The deceased lady was entombed in the

old family vault of the Valentines,* in the Reformed church at Fordham, by permission of the owner.

Everyone who knew the poet's wife describes her as charming in both manners and features. A portrait of her is in the possession of her half-sister, Mrs. Neilson Poe, and is said to be a good likeness. "From it it is clear that she was very beautiful." †

After all was over, and the hapless poet left to face the world once more, exhausted nature gave way, and he fell ill again; in fact, for some days he sank into an apathetic stupor, unconscious of all around ~~him~~. In faithful pursuance of her promise to his dying wife, Mrs. Shew still continued to befriend Poe. The following letter to her from Mrs. Clemm—who continued her watchful care of her unfortunate nephew—showed how much her aid was still depended upon:—

"Friday Evening.

"MY DEAR SWEET FRIEND,—I write to say that the medicines arrived the next train after you left to-day, and a kind friend brought them up to us that same hour. The cooling application was very grateful to my poor Eddie's head, and the flowers were lovely—not 'frozen,' as you feared they would be. I very much fear this illness is to be a serious one. The fever came on at the *same time* to-day (as you said it would), and I am giving the sedative mixture.

* Probably a branch of the Virginian Valentines, of which family the first Mrs. Allan was a member.—J. H. I.

† Letter from John P. Poe, Esq.—J. H. I.

He did not rouse up to talk to Mr. C——, as he would naturally do to so kind a friend. . . . Eddie made me promise to write you a note about the wine (which I neglected to tell you about this morning). He desires me to return the last box of wine you sent my sweet Virginia (there being some left of the first package, which I will put away for any emergency). The wine was a great blessing to us while *she needed* it, and by its cheering and tonic influence we were enabled to keep her a few days longer with us. The little darling always took it smiling, even when difficult to get it down. But for your timely aid, my dear Mrs. S., we should have had no last words—no loving messages—no *sweet farewells*, for she ceased to speak (from weakness) but with her beautiful eyes! . . . Eddie has quite set his heart upon the wine *going back to you*, thinking and hoping you may find it useful for the *sick artist* you mentioned ‘as convalescent and in need of delicacies.’ God bless you, my sweet child, and come soon to your sorrowing and desolate friend,

“MARIA CLEMM.

“P.S.—We look for you in an early train to-morrow, and hope you will stay as long as possible. What we should do without you now is fearful to think of. Eddie says you promised Virginia to come every other day for a long time, or until he was able to go to work again. I hope and believe *you will not fail him*; and I pray that every blessing may be yours, and may follow you in life, as your angelic tenderness and compassion deserve.

“Mr. C—— will tell you of our condition, as he is going to call for this note in an hour’s time; and, until we see you, farewell.”

For a few days, Edgar Poe, under the careful nursing which he received, appeared to recover, and during this short period of temporary convalescence indited the lines "To M—— L—— S——" (Marie Louise Shew). In this overflowing of an intense gratitude to her to whom he owed

"The resurrection of deep-buried faith
In Truth—in Virtue—in Humanity,"

the poet poured forth his thanks with all the vehemence of his impassioned nature, and all untrammelled by the ordinary conventionalities of that everyday life which he so hated and so despised.

The poet's convalescence was of short duration, and was terminated by a vain attempt to grapple with the difficulties of his position. He endeavoured to resume his correspondence, which involved him in all kinds of worries and distressing themes. On the 16th of February he replied to a correspondent who had informed him of a gross charge of plagiarism, which had been set afloat during his disabled condition.* On the 17th of the same month, his suit against the *Mirror* for the publication of the Dunn-English libel terminated in the poet's favour, the jury awarding Poe \$225 for defamation of his character, and this, notwithstanding the intemperate reply he had pub-

* *Vide* pp. 167, 168, vol. i., concerning the Conchology story.—J. H. I.
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lished. Of the award it appears probable that he never received a single dollar, the amount, if ever paid, apparently finding its way into the pockets of those who carried on the case for him.

Meanwhile, Poe suffered a relapse, and for some time his life was in danger. Mrs. Shew, however, did not forget her promise to his dead wife, and still continued her friendly exertions on the poet's behalf. Naturally, this kind lady could not provide for all the poet's requirements, she wrote, therefore, to a friend in the New York Union Club on the subject, and he brought the matter under the notice of some of the members, many of whom were personally acquainted with Poe. General Scott, who was present at the time, gave his five dollars, saying, "I wish I could make it five hundred," adding, that he believed "Poe to be much belied; that he had noble and generous *traits*, which belonged to the old and better school," concluding what was quite a speech for the old hero, that "true-hearted Americans ought to take care of her poets as well as her soldiers." General Scott, it should be pointed out, was uncle to the second wife of Mr. Allan, Poe's adoptive father; had known the poet from his childhood, and had obtained him his nomination to the West Point Military Academy. A private collection of about one hundred dollars was made, and with this, and certain amounts sent by "Stella" (Mrs.

Lewis), and other literary friends, old debts were paid off, and all urgent necessities provided for.

During the height of this last attack Mrs. Shew, who was a doctor's only daughter, and had received a medical education, nursed the invalid herself, alternating her nights at the bedside with Mrs. Clemm. The diary which she kept at that time she generously placed at our disposal, so far as it related to Poe, and from it the following interesting particulars are extracted:—"I made my diagnosis, and went to the great Dr. Mott with it; I told him that at best, when Mr. Poe was well, his pulse beat only ten regular beats, after which it suspended, or intermitted (as doctors say). I decided that in his best health he had lesion of one side of the brain, and as he could not bear stimulants or tonics, without producing insanity, I did not feel much hope that he could be raised up from brain fever brought on by extreme suffering of mind and body—actual want, and hunger, and cold having been borne by this heroic husband in order to supply food, medicine, and comforts to his dying wife—until exhaustion and lifelessness were so near at every reaction of the fever, that even sedatives had to be administered with extreme caution. . . . From the time the fever came on until I could reduce his pulse to eighty beats, he talked to me incessantly of the past, which was all new to me, and often begged me to

write his fancies for him, for he said he had promised so many greedy publishers his next efforts, that they would not only say that he did not keep his word, but would also revenge themselves by saying all sorts of evil of him if he should die."

The jottings taken down by Mrs. Shew at that time refer chiefly to Poe's early life, and have already been made use of in a former portion of this narrative.

As soon as the poet was enabled to get about again—for nature gradually reasserted her influence—he began to resume his wonted avocations. As yet, he was still unable to execute any continuous literary work, but, as a beginning, he attempted to pay off his epistolary debts. Upon the 10th of March he wrote to Mrs. Locke, of Lowell, Massachusetts, who, upon the publication of the newspaper paragraphs referring to his illness and poverty, had sent him some verses,* and a sympathetic letter proffering to assist him:—

"In answering your kind letter permit me in the very first place to absolve myself from a suspicion which, under the circumstances, you could scarcely have failed to entertain—a suspicion of discourtesy towards yourself, in not having more promptly replied to you. . . . I could not help fearing that should you see my letter to Mr. Willis—in which a natural pride, which I feel you could not blame, impelled me to shrink from public charity, even at the cost of truth, in

* Now in my possession.—J. H. I.

denying those necessities which were but too real—I could not help fearing that, should you see this letter, you would yourself feel pained at having caused me pain—at having been the means of giving further publicity to an unfounded report—at all events to the report of a wretchedness which I had thought it prudent (since the world regards wretchedness as a crime) so publicly to disavow. In a word, venturing to judge your noble nature by my own, I felt grieved lest my published denial might cause you to regret what you had done; and my first impulse was to write you, and assure you, even at the risk of doing so too warmly, of the sweet emotion, made up of respect and gratitude alone, with which my heart was filled to overflowing. While I was hesitating, however, in regard to the propriety of this step, I was overwhelmed by a sorrow so poignant as to deprive me for several weeks of all power of thought or action. Your letter, now lying before me, tells me that I had not been mistaken in your nature, and that I should not have hesitated to have addressed you; but believe me, my dear Mrs. Locke, that I am already ceasing to regard those difficulties or misfortunes which have led me to even this partial correspondence with yourself.”

The New England lady was only too delighted to have elicited a response from the famous poet, and such a confidential one too—for Poe, like Byron, Burns, and other brother bards, was ready to bare the secrets of his heart of hearts to the veriest stranger—and at once drew him into a correspondence that grew into personal acquaintance, and, eventually, entangled him in one of the most troublesome *imbroglios* of his life.

On the day following that on which the letter cited from above was written, the poet sent this little note to the representatives of the "Philosophical Society" of Wittenberg College, Springfield, Ohio, in acknowledgment of their letter informing him of his election, on the preceding 9th of February, to the honorary membership of that institution:—

"NEW YORK, *March 11, 1847.*

"GENTLEMEN,—Very serious illness has hitherto prevented me from replying to your most flattering letter of the 24th ult.

"May I now beg you to express to your Society my grateful acceptance and appreciation of the honour they have conferred on me?—With respect & esteem, I am, gentlemen,
Yo. mo. ob. St.,
EDGAR A. POE"

This fair specimen of autograph hunters' success in "drawing out" a distinguished contemporary having been disposed of, the poet is also found writing on the same date to an esteemed correspondent, on various topics already referred to, such as the Philadelphia *Saturday Evening Post's* charge of plagiarising Captain Brown's book on Conchology; the result of the suit against the *Mirror*; the projected *Stylus* magazine; the "Valdemar Case," and other matters. He remarks, "I am still quite sick, and overwhelmed with business—but snatch a few moments to reply to yours of the 21st ult. . . . I cannot tell why the review of Haw-

thorne does not appear—but I presume we shall have it by and by. He (Mr. Godey) paid me for it, when I sent it—so I have no business to ask about it.”

During the remainder of 1847 the poet led a secluded life with his mother-in-law, Mrs. Clemm, receiving occasional visits from his friends and admirers, but rarely forsaking the precincts of his sorrow-hallowed cottage. Mrs. Shew continued to visit Fordham at such intervals as her active life allowed, and on certain yet unfrequent occasions her patient went to New York. In her diary of this year Mrs. Shew has the following interesting reminiscence:—

“Mr. Poe came to town to go to a midnight service with a lady friend and myself. He went with us and followed the service like a *churchman*, looking directly towards the chancel, and holding one side of my prayer-book; sang the psalms with us, and to my astonishment struck up a tenor to our soprano; and got along nicely during the *first part of the service*, which was on the subject of the sympathies of our soul with our wants. The passage being often repeated, ‘He was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief,’ he begged me to remain quiet, and saying he would wait for us outside, he rushed out, *too excited to stay*. I knew he would not leave us to return home alone (although my friend thought it doubtful), and so, after the sermon, as I began to feel anxious—as we were in a strange church—I looked back and saw his pale face. As the congregation rose to sing the hymn, ‘Jesus, Saviour of my soul,’ he appeared at my side, and sang the hymn without looking at the book, in a fine,

clear tenor. He looked inspired. . . I did not dare to ask him why he left, but he mentioned after we got home that the subject 'was marvellously handled.'

Poe rarely forsook Fordham, however, during the year following his lost Lenore's death, but spent his time in mourning over her memory, and in thinking out the plan of the great and crowning work of his life—his great philosophical "prose-poem" "Eureka." Whilst engaged upon this work, records Mrs. Shew, he was quite certain of success. She endeavoured to curb his over sanguine expectations, for, she remarks, "I did not expect him to live long; I knew that organic disease had been gaining upon his physical frame through the many trials and privations of his eventful life. I told him in all candour that nothing could or would save him from sudden death but a prudent life of calm, with a woman fond enough and strong enough to manage his affairs for him. I was often subjected to his irony for my lectures, coming, as they did, from a woman so little skilled in worldly troubles or cares as I was then. . . . He said I had never troubled myself to read his works, or poems; which was true, for my heart found so much sorrow to sympathise with in the griefs of those I came in contact with, that there was no need of resorting to ideal woe; . . . but 'I was a rest for his spirit,' for this very reason."

The quiet and studious life Poe lived at Fordham,

meanwhile, was very different to that ascribed to him by the paragraph-mongers of the press, and the scarified victims of his pen. Many interesting recollections have been given by his visitors of the calm and solitary way in which he spent his time, during his residence at the quaint little Dutch cottage, but none more valuable than these autobiographic glimpses afforded by one of his unpublished letters :—

“The editor of the *Weekly Universe* speaks kindly, and I find no fault with his representing my habits as ‘shockingly irregular.’ He could not have had the ‘personal acquaintance’ with me, of which he writes, but has fallen into a very natural error. The fact is thus :—My *habits* are rigorously abstemious, and I omit nothing of the natural regimen requisite for health—*i.e.*, I rise early, eat moderately, drink nothing but water, and take abundant and regular exercise in the open air. But this is my private life—my studious and literary life—and of course escapes the eye of the world. The desire for society comes upon me only when I have become excited by drink. Then *only* I go—that is, at these times only I *have been* in the practice of going among my friends ; who seldom, or in fact never, having seen me unless excited, take it for granted that I am always so. Those who *really* know me, know better. In the meantime I shall turn the general error to account. But enough of this—the causes which maddened me to the drinking point are no more, and I am done with drinking for ever. I do *not* know the editors and contributors of the *Universe*, and was not aware of the existence of such a paper. Who are they ? or is it a secret ?”

This self-revelation, even if to be accepted *cum grano salis*, must be regarded as a most important contribution towards a thorough comprehension of the apparently complex and dual nature of Poe's existence. Further side-lights are flung upon his story, so far as this period of it is concerned, by the reminiscences of his various visitors at Fordham. An author who visited the poet's cottage during the summer of 1847, "described it as half buried in fruit-trees, and as having a thick grove of pines in its immediate neighbourhood." "The proximity of the railroad," says Mrs. Whitman, "and the increasing population of the little village, have since wrought great changes in the place. Round an old cherry-tree, near the door, was a broad bank of greenest turf. The neighbouring beds of mignonette and heliotrope, and the pleasant shade above, made this a favourite seat. Rising at four o'clock in the morning, for a walk to the magnificent aqueduct bridge over Harlem river, our informant found the poet, with his mother (Mrs. Clemm), standing on the turf beneath the cherry-tree, eagerly watching the movements of two beautiful birds that seemed contemplating a settlement in its branches. He had some rare tropical birds in cages, which he cherished and petted with assiduous care."

An English lady, as Mrs. Whitman further records, "passed several weeks at the little cottage in Fordham,

in the early autumn of 1847, and described to us, with a truly English appreciativeness, its unrivalled neatness, and the quaint simplicity of its interior and surroundings. It was at the time bordered by a flower-garden, whose clumps of rare dahlias and brilliant beds of autumnal flowers showed, in the careful culture bestowed upon them, the fine floral taste of the inmates." "Our English friend described the poet," resumes Mrs. Whitman, "as giving to his birds and his flowers a delighted attention that seemed quite inconsistent with the gloomy and grotesque character of his writings. A favourite cat, too, enjoyed his friendly patronage, and often when he was engaged in composition it seated itself on his shoulder, purring as if in complacent approval of the work proceeding under its supervision."

"During Poe's residence at Fordham a walk to High Bridge," continues our authority, "was one of his favourite and habitual recreations. The water of the aqueduct is conveyed across the river on a range of lofty granite arches, which rise to the height of a hundred and forty-five feet above high-water level. On the top a turfed and grassy road, used only by foot-passengers, and flanked on either side by a low parapet of granite, makes one of the finest promenades imaginable.

"The winding river and the high rocky shores at

the western extremity of the bridge are seen to great advantage from this lofty avenue. In the last melancholy years of his life—"the lonesome latter years"—Poe was accustomed to walk there at all times of the day and night; often pacing the then solitary pathway for hours without meeting a human being. A little to the east of the cottage rises a ledge of rocky ground, partly covered with pines and cedars, commanding a fine view of the surrounding country and of the picturesque College of St. John's, which had at that time in its neighbourhood an avenue of venerable old trees. This rocky ledge was also one of the poet's favourite resorts. Here, through long summer days, and through solitary, star-lit nights, he loved to sit, dreaming his gorgeous waking dreams, or pondering the deep problems of the *Universe*,—that grand 'prose-poem' to which he devoted the last and maturest energies of his wonderful intellect."

In this way the poet lived—"in a world of things ideal"—spending his time in musing over the forgotten past, and in devising schemes for a famous future. At times his solitude was broken in upon not only by his ever-welcome friends, but, also, by those most malignant pests of literary society, female bores, who wanted to make the renowned poet's acquaintance and engage his pen on their behalf in

friendly criticism. Mrs. Shew records that she often found such persons "sitting in Mrs. Clemm's little room, waiting to see the man of genius who had rushed out, to escape to the fields or forest, or to the grounds of the Catholic school in the vicinity. I remember," she relates, "Mrs. Clemm one day sending me after him in great secrecy, and I found him sitting on a favourite rock muttering his desire to die, and get rid of literary bores. He liked me for my ignorance and indifference, no doubt, to worldly honours, and lamented, in sincere sorrow, when I grew like the rest of the world by my duties and position."

During this period of mental incubation the poet published little, and that little had been chiefly written previous to 1847. "Eureka" greatly engaged his mind, but, so he frequently alleged, its publication was only to be regarded as the stepping-stone to the furtherance of starting a magazine of his own, on a safe and certain basis. This life-long dream gradually began to assume a more definite shape than it had hitherto worn; the name of the *Stylus* was permanently adopted for the projected publication, and a well-arranged plan devised for setting it afloat. Besides his "prose-poem," few literary compositions were attempted, and of these, the weird monody of "Ulalume" was the only one important. It was towards the close of this "most immemorial year"—

this year in which he had lost his cousin-bride,—that this “most musical, most melancholy” dirge was written. Like so much of his poetry, it was autobiographical, and, on his own authority we have it, was in its basis, although not in the precise correspondence of time, simply historical. “Such was the poet’s lonely midnight walk,” says Mrs. Whitman; “such, amid the desolate memories and sceneries of the hour, was the new-born hope enkindled within his heart at sight of the morning star—

‘Astarte’s bediamonded crescent’—

coming up as the beautiful harbinger of love and happiness yet awaiting him in the untried future, and such the sudden transition of feeling, the boding dread, that supervened on discovering that which had at first been unnoted, that it shone, as if in mockery or in warning, directly over the sepulchre of the lost ‘*Ulalume.*’”

This marvellously melodious poem first appeared anonymously, in Colton’s *American Review* for December 1847, as “*Ulalume: a Ballad,*” and, being reprinted in the *Home Journal*, was, by an absurd mistake, on a subsequent republication, ascribed to the then editor, N. P. Willis. The poem originally possessed an additional stanza which, at the suggestion of Mrs. Whitman, Poe eventually omitted, and,

thereby, greatly strengthened the effect. In after years, however, the lady regretted the suppression of these final lines, deeming them essential to the comprehension of the entire poem. Few persons will be likely to share this regret on reading the excluded verses, which read thus:—

" Said we then—the two, then—‘ Ah, can it
Have been that the woodlandish ghouls—
The pitiful, the merciful ghouls—
To bar up our path and to ban it
From the secret that lies in these wolds—
Had drawn up the spectre of a planet
From the limbo of lunary souls—
This sinfully scintillant planet
From the Hell of the planetary souls? ’ ”

Another poetical essay belonging to this year was the fanciful little piece entitled "An Enigma," written for "Stella" (Mrs. Estelle Anna Lewis), a lady already alluded to as having among others assisted Poe in the hour of his extreme need. This little effusion of gratitude did not appear in public until its issue in March 1848, in the *Union Magazine*, although it had been sent off several months before, as the following notelet shows:—

" November 27, 1847.

" DEAR MRS. LEWIS—A thousand thanks for your repeated kindness, and, above all, for the comforting and cheering words of your note. Your advice I feel as a command which

neither my heart nor my reason would venture to disobey. May Heaven for ever bless you and yours!

"A day or two ago I sent to one of the Magazines the sonnet enclosed. Its tone is somewhat too light; but it embodies a riddle which I wish to put you to the trouble of expounding. Will you try?

"My best regards, with those of Mrs. Clemm, to Mr. Lewis, and believe me, with all the affection of a brother.—
Yours always,

EDGAR A. POE."

CHAPTER XVIII.

EUREKA!

WITH the new year (1848) Edgar Poe's literary activity recommenced. In the first instance, he circulated as widely as possible the prospectus of his projected magazine, the *Stylus*, sending copies to all his friends and acquaintances in various parts of the States, and, generally, with an explanatory letter. This prospectus, which slightly varied, from time to time, at every reprint, is extremely interesting, as showing what were the poet's real views with respect to his life-long project, and what ideas he had formed as to the *beau idéal* of a journal. The prospectus reads:—

"THE STYLUS.

A Monthly Journal of Literature Proper, the Fine Arts, and the Drama.

To be Edited by

EDGAR A. POE.

"*To the Public.*—Since resigning the conduct of the *Southern Literary Messenger* at the beginning of its third
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year, and more especially since retiring from the Editorship of *Graham's Magazine* soon after the commencement of its second, I have had always in view the establishment of a monthly journal which should retain one or two of the chief features of the work first mentioned, abandoning or greatly modifying its general character;—but not until now have I felt at liberty to attempt the execution of this design.

“I shall be pardoned for speaking more directly of the two magazines in question. Having in neither of them any proprietary right; the objects of their worthy owners, too, being at variance with my own; I found it not only impossible to effect anything, on the score of taste, for their mechanical appearance, but difficult to stamp upon them internally that *individuality* which I believed essential to their success. In regard to the permanent influence of such publications, it appears to me that continuity and a marked certainty of purpose are requisites of vital importance; but attainable only where one mind alone has at least the general control. Experience, to be brief, has shown me that in founding a journal of my own, lies my sole chance of carrying out to completion whatever peculiar intentions I may have entertained.

“These intentions are now as heretofore. It shall be the chief purpose of the magazine proposed, to become known as one wherein may be found at all times, on all topics within its legitimate reach, a sincere and a fearless opinion. It shall be a leading object to assert in precept and to maintain in practice the rights, while in effect it demonstrates the advantages, of an absolutely independent criticism:—a criticism self-sustained; guiding itself only by intelligible laws of art; analysing these laws as it applies them; holding itself

aloof from all personal bias, and acknowledging no fear save that of the Right.

"In the first number of the *Stylus* the Editor will commence the publication of a work on which he has been employed unremittingly for the last two years. It will be called 'Literary America,' and will endeavour to present, much in detail, that great desideratum, a faithful account of the literary productions, literary people, and literary affairs of the United States.

"There is no design, however, to make the journal a critical one solely, or even very especially. It will aim at something *more* than the usual magazine variety, and at affording a fair field for the *true* talent of the land, without reference to the mere *prestige* of name or the advantages of worldly position. But since the efficiency of the work must in great measure depend upon its definitiveness, the *STYLUS* will limit itself to *Literature Proper, the Fine Arts, and the Drama.*

"In regard to what is going on, within the limits assigned, throughout the civilised world, it will be a principal object of the magazine to keep its readers really *au courant*. For this end, accurate arrangements have been made at London, Paris, Rome and Vienna. The most distinguished of American scholars has agreed to superintend the department of classical letters.* At all points the most effective aid is secured."

The remainder of the prospectus is devoted to the more technical portion of the project, being chiefly concerned with the matters of the journal's mechanical

* Professor Charles Anthon, *vide* p. 140.—J. H. I.

execution—which was promised to be far superior to the ordinary magazine style—with the quality of the paper, the rate of subscription, and so forth. Engravings, it may be noted, were promised not only to be of the highest art, but to be “only in obvious illustration of the text,” which was in contradiction of the custom then pretty prevalent in America, of “cooking up” some kind of text, or the other, to illustrate the illustration. Altogether, if this prospectus—dated “New York City, January 1848,” and signed by the poet—promised much, it only propounded a feasible scheme that, in more practical and more worldly-wise hands, should have and must have succeeded, when backed by so renowned and fascinating a reputation as was Poe’s.

At this period the poet was so sanguine of the success of his project, that his conversation and correspondence both were filled with the subject. He wrote to all his friends to assist him, forwarding them the prospectus and endeavouring to galvanise them into enthusiasm. From a letter to an old and long-neglected correspondent he wrote on the 4th of January in these terms:—

“GOOD FRIEND:—Your last, dated July 26th, ends with—‘Write, will you not?’ I have been living ever since in a constant state of intention to write, and finally concluded not to write at all, until I could say something definite

about the *Stylus* and other matters. You perceive that I now send you a Prospectus. But before I speak farther on this topic, let me succinctly reply to various points in your letter.

"1. 'Hawthorne' is out. How do you like it?

"2. 'The Rationale of Verse' was found to come down too heavily (as I forewarned you it did) upon some of poor Colton's friends in Frogpondium—the 'pundits,' you know; so I gave him 'a song' for it and took it back. The song was 'Ulalume—a Ballad,' published in the December number of the *American Review*. I enclose it, as copied by the *Home Journal* (Willis's paper), with the editor's remarks. Please let me know how you like 'Ulalume.' As for the 'Rat. of Verse,' I sold it to 'Graham' at a round advance on Colton's price, and in Graham's hands it is still—but not to remain even there; for I mean to get it back, revise or rewrite it (since 'Evangeline' has been published), and deliver it as a lecture when I go South and West on my Magazine expedition.

"3. I have been 'so still' on account of preparation for the Magazine campaign; also, have been working at my book—nevertheless I have written some trifles not yet published—some which have been.

"4. My health is better—best. I have never been so well.

"6. The 'common friend' alluded to is Mrs. Frances S. Osgood, the poetess.

"7. I agree with you only in part, as regards Miss Fuller.* She has some general, but no particular, critical powers. She belongs to a *school* of criticism—the Götthean,

* Margaret Fuller, afterwards Countess D'Ossoli.—J. H. I.

æsthetic, eulogistic. The creed of this school is that, in criticising an author, you must imitate him, ape him, out Herod - Herod. . . . For example, she abuses Lowell (the best of our poets, perhaps) on account of a personal quarrel with him. She has omitted all mention of me, for the same reason—although, a short time before the issue of her book, she praised me highly in the *Tribune*. I enclose you her criticism, that you may judge for yourself. She praised ‘Witchcraft,’ because Mathews . . . wrote it. In a word, she is an ill-tempered and very inconsistent *Old Maid*—avoid her. . . .

“And now, having replied to all your queries, let me refer to the *Stylus*. I am resolved to be my own publisher. To be controlled is to be ruined. My ambition is great. If I succeed, I put myself (within two years) in possession of a fortune and infinitely more. My plan is to go through the South and West, and endeavor to interest my friends so as to commence with a list of at least five hundred subscribers. With this list, I can take the matter into my own hands. There are some of my friends who have sufficient confidence in me to advance their subscription—but, at all events, succeed *I will*. Can you or will you help me? I have room to say no more. Truly yours, E. A. POE.”

If the poet expected his many acquaintances, and still more numerous admirers, to send him their dollars in advance, he speedily discovered his mistake, and saw that some other means must be adopted towards raising the amount requisite to defray his preliminary expenses. In order, therefore, to obtain sufficient capital to start him upon his tour in search

of subscribers, he determined to deliver a series of lectures, and, in the subjoined letter to Mr. H. D. Chapin, thus expresses his ideas on the subject, and the helplessness of his position :—

“ FORDHAM—*Jan 17*—48.

“ MY DEAR SIR,—Mrs. Shew intimated to me, not long ago, that you would, perhaps, lend me your aid in my endeavour to re-establish myself in the literary world ; and I now venture to ask your assistance. When I last spoke with you, I mentioned my design of going to see Mr. Neal at Portland, and there, with his influence, deliver a Lecture—the proceeds of which might enable me to take the first steps towards my proposed Magazine :—that is to say, put, perhaps, \$100 in my pocket ; which would give me the necessary outfit and start me on my tour. But, since our conversation, I have been thinking that a better course would be to make interest among my friends here—in N. Y. city—and deliver a Lecture, in the first instance, at the Society Library. With this object in view, may I beg of you so far to assist me as to procure for me the use of the Lecture Room ? The difficulty with me is that payment for the Room is demanded *in advance* and I have no money. I believe the price is \$15. I think that, without being too sanguine, I may count upon an audience of some 3 or 4 hundreds—and if even 300 are present, I shall be enabled to proceed with my plans.

“ Should you be so kind as to grant me the aid I request, I should like to engage the Room for the *first Thursday in February*.—Gratefully yours,

EDGAR A. POE.

“ I am deeply obliged to you for your note of introduction

to Col. Webb. As yet I have not found an opportunity of presenting it—thinking it best to do so when I speak to him about the Lecture.”

Mr. Chapin, or some other friend, apparently smoothed down all difficulties, for Poe made his definite arrangement for delivering the initial lecture of his campaign. Matters being thus far arranged, it became necessary to make the affair as public as possible, and in pursuance of this plan the aid of friendly editors had to be enlisted. N. P. Willis was, of course, applied to, and in these terms:—

“FORDHAM, January 22, 1848.

“MY DEAR MR. WILLIS,—I am about to make an effort at re-establishing myself in the literary world, and *feel* that I may depend upon your aid.

“My general aim is to start a Magazine, to be called the *Stylus*; but it would be useless to me, even when established, if not entirely out of the control of a publisher. I mean, therefore, to get up a Journal which shall be *my own*, at all points. With this end in view, I must get a list of, at least, five hundred subscribers to begin with:—nearly two hundred I have already. I propose, however, to go South and West, among my personal and literary friends—old College and West Point acquaintances—and see what I can do. In order to get the means of taking the first step, I propose to lecture at the Society Library, on Thursday, the 3rd of February—and, that there may be no cause of *squabbling*, my subject shall *not be literary* at all. I have chosen a broad text—‘The Universe.’

"Having thus given you *the facts* of the case, I leave all the rest to the suggestions of your own tact and generosity. —Gratefully, *most* gratefully, your friend always,—

"EDGAR A. POE."

Upon receipt of this communication, or rather upon a reminder that he had not alluded to Poe's intimation, Willis announced in the *Home Journal* that he had "by accident omitted to mention—in our last week's paper—that our friend and former editorial associate, Mr. Poe, was to deliver a lecture, on Thursday evening, February 3rd, at the Society Library. The subject is rather a broad one, 'The Universe;' but, from a mind so original, no text could furnish any clue to what would probably be the sermon. There is but one thing certain about it, that it will be compact of thought most fresh, startling, and suggestive. Delivered under the warrant of our friend's purely intellectual features and expression, such a lecture as he must write would doubtless be, to the listeners, a mental treat of a very unusual relish and point.

"We understand that the purpose of Mr. Poe's lecture is to raise the necessary capital for the establishment of a magazine, which he proposes to call the *Stylus*. They who like literature without trammels, and criticism without gloves, should send in their names forthwith as subscribers. . . . The severe afflictions with which Mr. Poe has been visited within

the last years have left him in a position to devote himself, self-sacrificingly, to his new task; and, with energies that need the exercise, he will, doubtless, give that most complete attention which alone can make such an enterprise successful."

Although Poe had given Willis "the facts of the case," he neither wished nor expected that his quondam associate should make them *all* public: he wished the lecture to be announced, but not the *cause* of the lecture being given. However, he had now to make the best of it, and exert himself to the utmost to face the public. Whatever curiosity there may have been to see the poet after his lengthy seclusion, and the distressing causes of it, certain it is that far too few persons attended the lecture to have rendered it a success, at least from a pecuniary point of view. The address was delivered in the library of the New York Historical Society, and was on the Cosmogony of the Universe, being, with some variation, a *précis* of his subsequently published "Eureka."

But few journals had drawn attention to the forthcoming lecture, and its delivery, it is recorded, took place on a stormy night: these reasons may, perhaps, account for the smallness of the audience. "There were not more than sixty persons in the room," says Mr. M. B. Field, who was present. "The lecture was a rhapsody of the most intense brilliancy. Poe appeared

inspired, and his inspiration affected the scant audience almost painfully. His eyes seemed to glow like those of his own 'Raven,' and he kept us entranced for two hours and a half."

Such scant audiences, despite the enthusiasm of the lecturer, or the lectured, could not give much material aid toward the furtherance of the poet's project. But, although poor and, for a time, baffled, he never for an instant gave up his hope, indeed, his *certainty*, of succeeding ultimately in starting his proposed periodical. For a time he had to return to his lonely Fordham home, to contemplate anew the complex problems of creation; or to discuss with stray, and often heedless, visitors, with an intensity of feeling and steadfastness of belief never surpassed, his unriddling of the secret of the Universe.

Writing to a correspondent on the 29th of February, he thus hopefully lays down his future plan of proceeding:—

"I mean to start for Richmond on the 10th March. Everything has gone as I wished it, and my final success is certain, or I abandon all claims to the title of Vates. The only contretemps of any moment, lately, has been Willis's somewhat premature announcement of my project:—but this will only force me into action a little sooner than I had proposed. Let me now answer the points of your last letter.

"C—— acted pretty much as all mere men of the world act. I think very little the worse of him for his endeavor

to succeed with you at my expense. I always liked him, and I believe he liked me. His 'I understand the matter perfectly' amuses me. Certainly, then, it was the only matter he did understand. His intellect was *O*.

"The Rationale of Verse' will appear in *Graham*, after all.* I will stop in Philadelphia to see the proofs.

"As for Godey, he is a good little man, and means as well as he knows how. . . .

"The 'most distinguished of American scholars'† is Professor Charles Anthon, author of the 'Classical Dictionary.'

"I presume you have seen some newspaper notices of my late lecture on the Universe. You could have gleaned, however, no idea of what the lecture was, from what the papers said it was. All praised it—as far as I have yet seen—and all absurdly misrepresented it. The only report of it which approaches the truth is the one I enclose—from the *Express*—written by E. A. Hopkins, a gentleman of much scientific acquirement, son of Bishop Hopkins, of Vermont; but he conveys only my general idea, and his digest is full of inaccuracies. I enclose also a slip from the *Courier and Enquirer*. Please return them. To eke out a chance of your understanding what I really *did* say, I add a loose summary of my propositions and results:—

"The General Proposition is this—Because Nothing was, *therefore* All Things are.

"1. An inspection of the *universality* of Gravitation—*i.e.*, of the fact that each particle tends, *not* to any one common point, but to *every other* particle—suggests perfect totality, or *absolute* unity, as the source of the phenomenon.

"2. Gravity is but the mode in which is manifested the

* It did not though, *vide* p. 105, vol. ii.—J. H. I.

† *Vide* prospectus of the *Stylus*, p. 131, vol. ii.—J. H. I.

tendency of all things to return into their original unity—is but the reaction of the first Divine Act.

“3. The *law* regulating the return—*i.e.*, the *law* of Gravitation—is but a necessary result of the necessary and sole possible mode of equable *irradiation* of matter through space : this *equable* irradiation is necessary as a basis for the Nebular Theory of Laplace.

“4. The Universe of Stars (contradistinguished from the Universe of Space) is limited.

“5. Mind is cognisant of Matter *only* through its two properties, attraction and repulsion : therefore Matter *is* only attraction and repulsion : a finally consolidated globe-of-globes, being but one particle, would be without attraction—*i.e.*, gravitation : the existence of such a globe presupposes the expulsion of the separative ether which we know to exist between the particles as at present diffused : thus the final globe would be matter without attraction and repulsion : but these *are* matter : then the final globe would be matter without matter—*i.e.*, no matter at all : it must disappear. Thus Unity is *Nothingness*.

“6. Matter, springing from Unity, sprang from Nothingness—*i.e.*, was *created*.

“7. All will return to Nothingness, in returning to Unity.

“Read these items *after* the Report. As to the Lecture, I am very quiet about it—but, if you have ever dealt with such topics, you will recognise the novelty and *moment* of my views. What I have propounded will (in good time) revolutionise the world of Physical and Metaphysical Science. I say this calmly—but I say it.

“I shall not go till I hear from you.—Cordially—

“E. A. POE.

"By the by, lest you infer that my views, in detail, are the same with those advanced in the *Nebular Hypothesis*,* I venture to offer a few addenda, the substance of which was penned, though never printed, several years ago, under the head of—'A Prediction.'"

These *addenda* would occupy a dozen or so pages and are, therefore, clearly unsuitable for our citation; besides, Poe's theory is much better explained in "Eureka"—a work available for all. His unconscionably lengthy epistle concludes with the jocular remark, "How will *that* do for a postscript?"

During the early part of 1848 the poet continued to exchange visits with a few of his friends, including Mrs. Shew, who still occasionally befriended him, and his "more than mother," Mrs. Clemm. It was at this time that his gratitude to the noble-hearted woman for her kindness to him, and to her who had been "dearer to *his* soul than its own soul-life," again, for the second time, vented itself in melodious verse. He indited some fresh lines "To Marie Louise," a portion only of which were ever published, and then without a title. The following letter to the same lady refers to the project alluded to in the last-cited epistle, that is to say, his intention of delivering a series of lectures in the various chief cities of the States, beginning with Richmond, Virginia:—

* Of Laplace.—J. H. I.

“Thursday, March 30.

“DEAREST LOUISE,—You see that I am not yet off to Richmond as I proposed. I have been detained by some very unexpected and very important matters which I will explain to you when I see you. What *is* the reason that you have not been out? I believe the *only* reason is that you suspect I am really anxious to see you.

“When you see Mr. H.— I wish you would say to him that I would take it as an especial favor if he would pay me a visit at Fordham next Sunday. I have something to communicate to him *of the highest importance*, and about which I need his advice. Won’t you get him to come—and come with him to show him the way?—Sincerely yours,

“EDGAR A. POE”

As desired, the Mr. H——, referred to above, called upon the poet and found that his advice was wanted with respect to the proposed publication of “Eureka” in book form. “I had heard his brilliant lecture on the occasion of its first delivery, and was much interested in it,” says this gentleman. “I did all I could to persuade him to omit the bold declaration of Pantheism at the close, which was not necessary to the completeness or beauty of the lecture. But I soon found that *that* was the dearest part of the whole to him; and we got into quite a discussion on the subject of Pantheism. For some time his tone and manner were very quiet, though slowly changing as we went on, until at last a look of scornful pride, worthy of Milton’s Satan, flashed over his pale delicate

face and broad brow, and a strange thrill nerved and dilated for an instant his slight figure, as he exclaimed, 'My whole nature utterly *revolts* at the idea that there is any Being in the Universe superior to *myself*!' I knew then that there was no use in further argument. The subject was dropped, and there was nothing further in the interview that I can now recall. But that sentence, and the mode of its utterance, made an indelible impression. . . . There is one other incident that I recall concerning that visit. . . . He was speaking of his near neighbours, the Jesuit Fathers at Fordham College, and praised them warmly: 'They were highly-cultivated gentlemen and scholars,' he said, 'smoked, drank, and played cards like gentlemen, and never said a word about religion.'

Having made his final revisions of the "Eureka," and, probably, hoping to derive sufficient for the copyright of a first edition to start him upon his lecturing tour, the poet went to town and saw Mr. George Putnam, the publisher, with a view of arranging for the publication of his work. Mr. Putnam's own account of the interview and its result is, doubtless, a somewhat imaginative one, but is interesting as affording renewed evidence of the intense belief which Poe had in the truth of his own theory. The publisher's account runs that a gentleman one day entered the office, and in a nervous and excited manner, requested

his attention to a matter of the greatest importance :—

"Seated at my desk, and looking at me a full minute with his 'glittering eye,' he at length said, 'I am Mr. Poe.' I was 'all ear,' of course, and sincerely interested. It was the author of 'The Raven' and of 'The Gold Bug!'* 'I hardly know,' said the poet, after a pause, 'how to begin what I have to say. It is a matter of profound importance.' After another pause, the poet seeming to be in a tremor of excitement, he at length went on to say that the publication he had to propose was of momentous interest. Newton's discovery of gravitation was a mere incident compared with the discoveries revealed in this book. It would at once command such unusual and intense interest that the publisher might give up all other enterprises, and make this one book the business of his lifetime. An edition of fifty thousand copies might be sufficient to begin with, but it would be but a small beginning. No other scientific event in the history of the world approached in importance the original developments of the book. All this and more, not in irony or jest, but in *intense* earnest—for he held me with his eye, like the Ancient Mariner. I was really impressed, but not overcome. Promising a decision on Monday (it was late Saturday), the poet had to rest so long in uncertainty, upon the *extent* of the edition, partly reconciled by a small loan meanwhile. We *did* venture, not upon fifty thousand, but five hundred."[†]

* It appears singular that Mr. Putnam did not know the poet at once, seeing that he had already, as representative of the firm of Wiley & Putnam, published two books by Poe.—J. H. I.

† *Putnam's Magazine*, second series, vol. iv. p. 471.

Accordingly, in the course of a few weeks, the work upon which Poe had spent so many months, and, indeed, in some respects, years of thought, was published in a handsomely-printed volume of 144 pages, as “*Eureka: a Prose Poem; by Edgar A. Poe.*” The work was dedicated, “with very profound respect,” to Alexander von Humboldt, and was heralded by this *Preface*:—

“To the few who love me and whom I love—to those who feel rather than to those who think—to the dreamers and those who put faith in dreams as in the only realities—I offer this Book of Truths, not in its character of Truth-Teller, but for the Beauty that abounds in its Truth; constituting it true. To these I present the composition as an Art-Product alone:—let us say as a Romance; or, if I be not urging too lofty a claim, as a Poem.

“*What I here propound is true*;—therefore it cannot die:—or if by any means it be now trodden down so that it die, it will ‘rise again to the Life Everlasting.’

“Nevertheless, it is as a Poem only that I wish this work to be judged after I am dead. E. A. P.”

It was in a style perfectly in accordance with the magnitude and magnificence of the theme he had undertaken to dilate upon, that the poet commenced the *opus magnum* of his life: he begins thus—

“It is with humility really unassumed—it is with a sentiment even of awe—that I pen the opening sentence of this work: for of all conceivable subjects I approach the reader with the most solemn—the most comprehensive—the most difficult—the most august.

"What terms shall I find sufficiently simple in their sublimity—sufficiently sublime in their simplicity—for the mere enunciation of my theme ?

"I design to speak of the *Physical, Metaphysical and Mathematical—of the Material and Spiritual Universe:—of its Essence, its Origin, its Creation, its Present Condition and its Destiny.* I shall be so rash, moreover, as to challenge the conclusions, and thus, in effect, to question the sagacity, of many of the greatest and most justly revered of men.

"In the beginning, let me as distinctly as possible announce—not the theorem which I hope to demonstrate—for, whatever the mathematicians may assert, there is, in this world at least, *no such thing* as demonstration—but the ruling idea which, throughout this volume, I shall be continually endeavouring to suggest.

"My general proposition, then, is this :—*In the Original Unity of the First Thing lies the Secondary Cause of All Things, with the Germ of their Inevitable Annihilation.*"

No comprehending reader can deny the grandeur and fascination of this work, although if—after the mind has had time to recover from the spell which has hurried it along through the all-absorbing theme to the last startling climax—we begin to question and to doubt, Poe's analysis of creation will, probably, be found to be no more convincing than its thousand-and-one predecessors. Yet a spell there is about it due to something more than mere witchery of words ; due to the fact that startling theories bearing all the semblance of truths—truths hitherto untold, or dimly

guessed at—are frequently enunciated and demonstrated as nearly as verbal demonstration is capable of. The only critical examination of the technical merits of this work, with which we are acquainted, is contained in a very remarkable article by Dr. William Hand Browne, in the *New Eclectic Magazine*, on "Poe's 'Eureka' and Recent Scientific Speculations," wherein is shown how the various theories advanced by the poet have been singularly paralleled by those of the most recent and distinguished scientists and corroborated by their discoveries.

A great hindrance to the acceptance of this work by scientific inquirers is the absurd, and utterly-out-of-place attempt at humour, displayed in the tirade against the Aristotelian and Baconian schools of philosophy, at the commencement of the essay. This, and the fact that the author is well known as a writer of fiction and *poetry*, have combined to impede the influence of "Eureka" in the sphere where its value could best be gauged.

Poe himself was a staunch believer in the truth of his theory of creation, and was wont to discuss the knotty points in "Eureka" with an eloquence that temporarily persuaded, even if it did not permanently convince, his hearers. He could not submit to hear the merits of his work discussed by unsympathetic and incompetent critics, and after it was published

in book form, and thus become public property, addressed this thoroughly characteristic letter to Mr. Charles Fenno Hoffmann, then editing the New York *Literary World*, respecting a flippant critique of the book which had appeared in the columns of that periodical:—

“DEAR SIR,—In your paper of July 29, I find some comments on ‘Eureka,’ a late book of my own; and I know you too well to suppose, for a moment, that you will refuse me the privilege of a few words in reply. I feel, even, that I might safely claim, from Mr. Hoffman, the right, which every author has, of replying to his critic *tone for tone*—that is to say, of answering your correspondent, flippancy by flippancy and sneer by sneer—but, in the first place, I do not wish to disgrace the ‘World’; and, in the second, I feel that I should never be done sneering, in the present instance, were I once to begin. Lamartine blames Voltaire for the use which he made of (*ruse*) misrepresentations, in his attacks on the priesthood; but our young students of Theology do not seem to be aware that in defence, or what they fancy to be defence, of Christianity, there is anything wrong in such gentlemanly peccadillos as the deliberate perversion of an author’s text—to say nothing of the minor *indecora* of reviewing a book without reading it and without having the faintest suspicion of what it is about.

“You will understand that it is merely the *misrepresentations* of the *critique* in question to which I claim the privilege of reply:—the mere *opinions* of the writer can be of no consequence to me—and I should imagine of very

little to himself—that is to say if he knows himself, personally, so well as *I* have the honour of knowing him. The first misrepresentation is contained in this sentence:—‘This letter is a keen burlesque on the Aristotelian or Baconian methods of ascertaining Truth, both of which the writer ridicules and despises, and pours forth his rhapsodical ecstasies in a glorification of a third mode—the noble art of *guessing*.’ What I *really* say is this:—‘That there is no absolute *certainty* either in the Aristotelian or Baconian process—that, for this reason, neither Philosophy is so profound as it fancies itself—and that neither has a right to sneer at that *seemingly* imaginative process called Intuition (by which the great Kepler attained his laws); since ‘Intuition,’ after all, is but the conviction arising from those *inductions* or *deductions* of which the processes are so shadowy as to escape our consciousness, elude our reason, or defy our capacity of expression.’ The second misrepresentation runs thus:—‘The development of electricity and the formation of stars and suns, luminous and non-luminous, moons and planets, with their rings, &c., is deduced, very much according to the nebular theory of Laplace, from the principle propounded above.’ Now the impression intended to be made here upon the reader’s mind, by the ‘Student of Theology,’ is, evidently, that my theory may be all very well in its way, but that it is nothing but Laplace over again, with some modifications that he (the Student of Theology) cannot regard as at all important. I have only to say that no gentleman can accuse me of the disingenuousness here implied; inasmuch as, having proceeded with my theory to that point at which Laplace’s theory *meets it*, I then *give Laplace’s theory in full*, with the expression of my firm conviction of its absolute truth *at all points*. The ground

covered by the great French astronomer compares with that covered by my theory, as a bubble compares with the ocean on which it floats; nor has he the slightest allusion to 'the principle propounded above,' the principle of Unity being the source of all things—the principle of Gravity being merely the Reaction of the Divine Act which irradiated all things from Unity. In fact, *no* point of *my* theory has been even so much as alluded to by Laplace. I have not considered it necessary, here, to speak of the astronomical knowledge displayed in the 'stars and suns' of the Student of Theology, nor to hint that it would be better grammar to say that 'development and formation' *are*, than that development and formation *is*. The third misrepresentation lies in a footnote, where the critic says, 'Further than this, Mr. Poe's claim that he can account for the existence of all organised beings, man included, merely from those principles on which the origin and present appearance of suns and worlds are explained, must be set down as mere bald assertion, without a particle of evidence. In other words, we should term it *arrant fudge*.' The perversion at this point is involved in a wilful misapplication of the word 'principles.' I say 'wilful,' because, at page 63, I am *particularly* careful to distinguish between the principles proper, Attraction and Repulsion, and those merely resultant *sub-principles* which control the universe in detail. To these sub-principles, swayed by the immediate spiritual influence of Deity, I leave, without examination, *all that* which the Student of Theology so roundly asserts I account for on the *principles* which account for the constitution of suns, &c. . . .

"Were these 'misrepresentations' (*is* that the name for them?) made for any less serious a purpose than that of branding my book as 'impious,' and myself as a 'pantheist,'

a 'polytheist,' a Pagan, or a God knows what (and indeed I care very little so it be not a 'Student of Theology'), I would have permitted their dishonesty to pass unnoticed, through pure contempt for the boyishness—for the *turn-down-shirt-collarness* of their tone:—but, as it is, you will pardon me, Mr. Editor, that I have been compelled to expose a 'critic,' who, courageously preserving his own *anonymosity*, takes advantage of my absence from the city to misrepresent, and thus vilify me, *by name*.
EDGAR A. POE.

"FORDHAM, September 20, 1848."

Some small pecuniary recompense, probably, accrued to Poe from the publication of "Eureka," for directly after that event, and some months previous to the writing of the above letter, he started on his long-projected tour, the object of which was to raise the means, by lectures and obtaining subscribers' names, to start the *Stylus*. He is first heard of at Richmond, Virginia, where he renewed several old, and made some new, acquaintanceships. Among the latter was Mr. John R. Thompson's, who had become proprietor of the *Southern Literary Messenger*, the periodical upon which Poe's editorial career had commenced, and to the pages of which he now agreed to resume contributing. As they became more intimate, Mr. Thompson became much attached to the poet—as, indeed, did all who were personally acquainted with him—and recorded some pleasing reminiscences of their intercourse.

"It was not until within two years of his death,"

he remarks, "that I ever met Mr. Poe, but during that time" (the two years) "I saw him very often. When in Richmond he made the office of the *Messenger* a place of frequent resort. His conversation was always attractive, and at times very brilliant. Among modern authors his favourite was Tennyson, and he delighted to recite from the 'Princess' the song, 'Tears, idle tears'—a fragment of which—

" 'When unto dying eyes
The casement slowly grows a glimmering square'—

he pronounced unsurpassed by any image expressed in writing."

From Richmond, Poe appears to have returned home to Fordham, and there to have laboured industriously for the magazines. He left home but rarely, and then only by special arrangement. A very characteristic letter to his constant friend, Mrs. Shew, is referable to this epoch; it reads thus:—

" *Sunday Night.*

"MY DEAR FRIEND LOUISE—Nothing for months has given me so much real pleasure as your note of last night. I have been engaged all day on some promised work, otherwise I should have replied immediately—as my heart inclined. I sincerely hope you may not drift out of my sight before I can thank you. How kind of you to let me do even *this small service* for you, in return for the great debt I owe you! Louise!—my brightest, most unselfish of all who ever loved me! . . .

I shall have so much pleasure in thinking of you and yours in that music room and library. Louise—I give you great credit for taste in these things, and I know I can please you in the purchases. During my first call at your house after my Virginia's death, I noticed with so much pleasure the large painting over the piano, which is a masterpiece, indeed ; and I noticed the size of all your paintings—the scrolls instead of set figures of the drawing-room carpet—the soft effect of the window shades—also the crimson and gold. . . . I was charmed to see the harp and piano uncovered. The pictures of Raphael and 'The Cavalier' I shall never forget—their softness and beauty ! The guitar with the blue ribbon, music stand, and antique jars. I wondered that a little country maiden like you had developed so classic a taste and atmosphere. Please present my kind regards to your uncle, and say that I am at his service any—or every—day this week ; and ask him, please, to specify time and place.—Yours sincerely,
EDGAR A. POE."

In explanation of this communication, it should be stated that Mrs. Shew had requested the poet to assist her uncle in selecting furniture for a new house she had taken. "I gave him *carte blanche*," she remarks, "to furnish the music-room and library as he pleased. I had hung the pictures myself, . . . placing over the piano a large painting by Albano. Mr. Poe admired it for hours, and never seemed tired of gazing upon it. . . . Mr. Poe was much pleased at my request, and my uncle said he had never seen him so cheerful and natural—'quite like other people.'"

It was shortly after this, during the summer,* that Poe wrote the first rough draft of "The Bells," and at Mrs. Shew's residence. "One day he came in," she records, and said, "Marie Louise, I have to write a poem; I have no feeling, no sentiment, no inspiration." His hostess persuaded him to have some tea. It was served in the conservatory, the windows of which were open, and admitted the sound of neighbouring church bells. Mrs. Shew said, playfully, "Here is paper;" but the poet, declining it, declared, "I so dislike the noise of bells to-night, I cannot write. I have no subject—I am exhausted." The lady then took up the pen, and, pretending to mimic his style, wrote, "The Bells, by E. A. Poe;" and then, in pure sportiveness, "The Bells, the little silver Bells," Poe finishing off the stanza. She then suggested for the next verse, "The heavy iron Bells;" and this Poe also expanded into a stanza. He next copied out the complete poem, and headed it, "By Mrs. M. L. Shew," remarking that it was her poem; as she had suggested and composed so much of it.† Mrs. Shew continues, "My brother came in, and I sent him to Mrs. Clemm to tell her that 'her boy would stay in town, and was well.' My brother took Mr. Poe to his own room, where he slept twelve hours,

* Not autumn, as has been incorrectly published.—J. H. I.

† This manuscript is now in my possession.—J. H. I.

and could hardly recall the evening's work. This showed his mind was injured," comments the lady, "nearly gone out for want of food, and from disappointment. He had not been drinking, and had only been a few hours from home. Evidently his vitality was low, and he was nearly insane. While he slept we studied his pulse, and found the same symptoms which I had so often noticed before. I called in Dr. Francis * (the old man was odd, but very skilful), who was one of our neighbours. His words were, 'He has heart disease, and will die early in life.' We did not waken him, but let him sleep." The day following, records Mrs. Shew, "After he had breakfasted, I went down town with him, and drove him home to Fordham in my carriage. He did not seem to realise that he had been ill, and wondered why 'Madame Louise' had been so good as to bring him home."

This incident not only depicts the almost boyish simplicity of the poet in many matters, but also shows to what a debilitated and critical state his health had now been reduced. His contempt for the ordinary conventionalities of life rendered it difficult, at times, for his friends to maintain their relations with him. Mrs. Shew long continued to befriend him and his aunt, but, ultimately, his continually increasing eccentricities compelled her to define more closely the

* *Vide Poe's Works*, vol. iv. pp. 419-421. Edinburgh, 1874-5.

limits of their intercourse. Poe took umbrage at this, and in June of this year indited his last letter to her. With respect to some of the passages in this epistle Mrs. Shew makes these remarks:—"I believe I am the only correspondent of Mr. Poe to whom he called himself 'a lost soul.' He did not believe his soul was lost—it was only a sarcasm he liked to repeat to express his sufferings and despair. I never saw a quotation from 'The Raven' in any letter of his but this. . . . Mr. Poe's cat always left her cushion to rub my hand, and I had always to speak to it before it would retire to its place of rest again. He called her 'Catarina'—she seemed possessed. I was nervous and almost afraid of his wonderful cat. Mr. Poe would get up in the night to let her in or out of the house or room, and it would not eat when he was away."

This appeal to his kind-hearted friend ran thus:—

"Can it be true, Louise, that you have the idea fixed in your mind to desert your unhappy and unfortunate friend and patient? You did not say so, I know, but for months I have known you were deserting me, not willingly, but none the less surely—my destiny—

'Disaster, following fast and following faster, till his song one burden bore—

Till the dirges of his Hope that melancholy burden bore—
Of "Never—nevermore."

So I have had premonitions of this for months. I repeat, my

good spirit, my loyal heart! must this follow as a sequel to all the benefits and blessings you have so generously bestowed? Are you to vanish like all I love, or desire, from my darkened and 'lost soul?' I have read over your letter again and again, and cannot make it possible, with any degree of certainty, that you wrote it in your right mind. (*I know you did not without tears of anguish and regret.*) Is it possible your influence is lost to me? Such tender and true natures are ever loyal until death; but you are not dead, you are full of life and beauty! Louise, you came in . . . in your floating white robe—'Good morning, Edgar.' There was a touch of conventional coldness in your hurried manner, and your attitude as you opened the kitchen-door to find Muddie,* is *my last remembrance of you*. There was love, hope, and sorrow in your smile, instead of love, hope, and courage, as ever before. O Louise, how many sorrows are before you! Your ingenuous and sympathetic nature will be constantly wounded in its contact with the hollow, heartless world; and for me, alas! unless some true and tender, and pure womanly love saves me, I shall hardly last a year longer alive! A few short months will tell how far my strength (physical and moral) will carry me in life here. How can I believe in Providence when *you* look coldly upon me? Was it not you who renewed my hopes and faith in God? . . . and in humanity? Louise, I heard your voice as you passed out of my sight leaving me . . .; but I still listened to your voice. I heard you say with a sob, 'Dear Muddie.' I heard you greet *my Catarina*, but it was only as a memory . . . nothing escaped *my ear*, and I was convinced it was not your generous self. . . repeating words so foreign to your nature—to your tender heart! I heard you sob out your

* Mrs. Clemm's pet name at home.—J. H. I.

sense of duty to my mother, and I heard her reply 'Yes, Loui . . . yes.' . . . Why turn your soul from its true work for the desolate to the thankless and miserly world? . . . I felt my heart stop, and I was sure I was then to die before your eyes. Louise, it is well—it is fortunate—you looked up with a tear in your dear eyes, and raised the window, and talked of the guava you had brought for my sore throat. Your instincts are better than a *strong man's reason for me*—I trust they may be for *yourself*. Louise, I feel I shall not prevail—a shadow has already fallen upon your soul, and is reflected in your eyes. It is *too late*—you are floating away with the cruel tide . . . it is not a common trial—it is a fearful one to me. Such rare souls as yours so beautify this earth! so relieve it of all that is repulsive and sordid. So brighten its toils and cares, it is hard to lose sight of them even for a short time . . . but you must know and *be assured* of my regret and my sorrow if aught I have ever written has hurt you. *My heart never wronged you*. I place you in *my esteem*—in *all solemnity*—beside the friend of my boyhood—the mother of my schoolfellow, of whom I told you, and as I have repeated in the poem . . . as the truest, tenderest of this world's most womanly souls, and an angel to my forlorn and darkened nature. I will not say 'lost soul' again, for your sake. I will try to overcome my grief for the sake of your unselfish care of me in the past, and in life or death, I am ever yours gratefully and devotedly,

"EDGAR A. POE."

With this characteristic communication the poet's correspondence with his disinterested and generous friend came to an end. They never met again.

CHAPTER XIX.

HELEN WHITMAN.

POE had not been back in Fordham long before he once more started off on a lecturing engagement, and this time to Lowell, Massachusetts, whence flattering propositions had reached him. Upon his arrival there he lectured upon "The Female Poets of America." The subject was one which afforded him plenty of scope for awarding certain New England ladies their due meed of praise, and amongst those named he specially selected Mrs. Helen Whitman for "pre-eminence in refinement of art, enthusiasm, imagination, and genius, properly so-called." Personally, Poe was unacquainted with this lady, but she had been seen by him, so it is averred, "on his way from Boston, when he visited that city to deliver a poem before the Lyceum there. Restless, near midnight, he wandered from his hotel near where she lived, until he saw her walking in a garden. He related the incident afterwards in one of his most exquisite poems,

worthy of himself, of her, and of the most exalted passion." *

There is no need to inquire into the truth of this romantic story, which Poe's poem, indeed, lends some colouring to, it sufficing to record that the poet had for some long time past expressed deep interest in Mrs. Whitman's poetic contributions to the magazines, and had alluded to them, on several occasions, in the most flattering terms. Eventually, upon a so-called "Valentine" party being given to the literati of New York, in the winter of 1847-8, Mrs. Whitman, at a friend's request, contributed some anonymous verses to the author of "The Raven." The remainder of the story may be continued in Poe's own words in a long subsequent letter to the lady:—

"I have already told you that some few casual words spoken of you by — — —, were the first in which I had ever heard your name mentioned. She alluded to what she called your 'eccentricities,' and hinted at your sorrows. Her description of the former strangely arrested—her allusion to the latter enchained and rivetted my attention.

"She had referred to thoughts, sentiments, traits, *moods*, which I knew to be my own, but which, until that moment, I had believed to be my own solely—unshared by any human being. A profound sympathy took immediate possession of my soul. I cannot better explain to you what I felt than by

* Beginning, "I saw thee once—once only—years ago."

saying that your unknown heart seemed to pass into my bosom—there to dwell for ever—while mine, I thought, was translated into your own.

“From that hour I loved you. Since that period I have never seen nor heard your name without a shiver, half of delight, half of anxiety.—The impression left upon my mind was that you were still a wife, and it is only within the last few months that I have been undeceived in this respect.

“For this reason I shunned your presence and even the city in which you lived. You may remember that once when I passed through Providence with Mrs. Osgood I positively refused to accompany her to your house, and even provoked her into a quarrel by the obstinacy and seeming unreasonableness of my refusal. I dared neither go nor say why I could not. I dared not speak of you—much less see you. For years your name never passed my lips, while my soul drank in, with a delirious thirst, all that was uttered in my presence respecting you.

“The merest whisper that concerned you awoke in me a shuddering sixth sense, vaguely compounded of fear, ecstatic happiness and a wild inexplicable sentiment that resembled nothing so nearly as a consciousness of guilt.

“Judge, then, with what wondering, unbelieving joy, I received, in your well-known MS., the Valentine which first gave me to see that you knew me to exist.

“The idea of what men call Fate lost then in my eyes its character of futility. I felt that nothing hereafter was to be doubted, and lost myself for many weeks in one continuous, delicious dream, where all was a vivid, yet indistinct bliss.—

“Immediately after reading the Valentine, I wished to contrive some mode of acknowledging—without wounding you by seeming directly to acknowledge—my sense—oh, my

keen—my exulting—my ecstatic sense of the honour you had conferred on me. To accomplish as I wished it, precisely *what* I wished, seemed impossible, however ; and I was on the point of abandoning the idea, when my eyes fell upon a volume of my own poems ; and then the lines I had written, in my passionate boyhood, to the first purely ideal love of my soul—to the Helen Stannard of whom I told you—flashed upon my recollection. I turned to them. They expressed all—*all* that I would have said to you—so fully—so accurately and so exclusively, that a thrill of intense superstition ran at once through my frame. Read the verses and then take into consideration the peculiar need I had, at the moment, for just so seemingly an unattainable mode of communication with you as they afforded. Think of the absolute appositeness with which they fulfilled that need—expressing not only all that I would have said of your person, but all that of which I most wished to assure you, in the lines commencing—

“On desperate seas long wont to roam.”

Think of the rare agreement of name, and you will no longer wonder that to one accustomed as I am to the Calculus of Probabilities, they wore an air of positive miracle. . . . I yielded at once to an overwhelming sense of Fatality. From that hour I have never been able to shake from my soul the belief that my Destiny, for good or for evil, either here or hereafter, is in some measure interwoven with your own.

“Of course I did not expect, on your part, any acknowledgment of the printed lines ‘To Helen ;’ and yet, without confessing it even to myself, I experienced an indefinable sense of sorrow in your silence. At length, when I thought you had time fully to forget me (if, indeed, you had had

ever really remembered) I sent you the anonymous lines in MS. I wrote, first, through a pining, burning desire to communicate with you in *some way*—even if you remained in ignorance of your correspondent. The mere thought that *your* dear fingers would press—*your* sweet eyes dwell upon characters which *I* had penned—characters which had welled out upon the paper from the depths of so devout a love—filled my soul with a rapture, which seemed, then, all sufficient for my human nature. It *then* appeared to me that merely this one thought involved so much of bliss that here on earth I could have no right ever to repine—no room for discontent. If ever, *then*, I dared to picture for myself a richer happiness, it was always connected with your image in Heaven. But there was yet another idea which impelled me to send you those lines:—I said to myself the sentiment—the holy passion which glows in my bosom *for her*, is of Heaven, heavenly, and has no taint of the earth. Thus then must lie in the recesses of her own pure bosom, at least the germ of a reciprocal love, and if this be indeed so, she will need no earthly clue—she will instinctively feel who is her correspondent—In this case, then, I may hope for some faint token at least, giving me to understand that the source of the poem is known and its sentiment comprehended even if disapproved.

“O God!—how long—*how long* I waited in *vain*—hoping against hope—until, at length, I became possessed with a spirit far sterner—far more reckless than despair—I explained to you—but without detailing the vital influences they wrought upon my fortune—the singular additional, yet seemingly trivial fatality by which you happened to address your anonymous stanzas to Fordham instead of New York—by which my aunt happened to get notice of their being in

the West Farm post-office. But I have not yet told you that your lines reached me in Richmond on the very day in which I was about to enter on a course which would have borne me far, far away from *you*, sweet, sweet Helen, and from this divine dream of your love."

In the above words Poe has depicted his ideal feelings only, for, as yet, they do not portray any personal knowledge of Mrs. Whitman. The lady's poetic response, and a vivid lifelike dream Mrs. Osgood's verbal description of her had excited, determined the poet to seek an introduction to his unknown correspondent. In the meanwhile, he wrote to an English acquaintance visiting Providence, under date of June 10th, 1848, these words of inquiry:—

"Do you know Mrs. Whitman? I feel deep interest in her poetry and character. I have never seen her—never but once. — — —, however, told me many things about the romance of her character which singularly interested me and excited my curiosity. Her poetry is beyond question *poetry*—instinct with genius. Can you not tell me something about her—anything—everything you know—and *keep my secret*—that is to say, let no one know that I have asked you to do so? *May I trust you?* I can and will.—Believe me truly your friend,

EDGAR A. POE."

Soon after this letter reached its destination, its recipient visited Mrs. Whitman at her mother's house. Miss Maria McIntosh, the well-known authoress, was present, and, it being a bright moonlight night, she

remarked to Mrs. Whitman, "'On such a night as this,' one month ago, I met Mr. Poe for the first time, at the house of a gentleman in Fordham, and his whole talk was about you." Upon hearing this, the English lady, upon whose secrecy Poe had so implicitly relied, spoke of the letter she had received containing the above cited inquiries, and, ultimately, gave the letter itself to Mrs. Whitman.

In the ensuing September Edgar Poe sought and obtained a letter of introduction from Miss McIntosh, and presented it to Mrs. Whitman in person. He repeated his visit, and avowed a love to which, for many reasons, the lady dared not respond. On bidding the poet farewell, however, she promised to write to him and explain many things which she could not impart in conversation. In his answer to her first letter occur these words:—

"I have pressed your letter again and again to my lips, sweetest Helen—bathing it in tears of joy, or of a 'divine despair.' But I—who so lately, in your presence, vaunted the 'power of words'—of what avail are mere words to me now? *Could* I believe in the efficiency of prayers to the God of Heaven, I would indeed kneel—humbly kneel—at this the most earnest epoch of my life—kneel in entreaty for words—*but* for words that should disclose to you—that might enable me to lay bare to you my whole heart. All thoughts—all passions seem now merged in that one consuming desire—the mere wish to make you comprehend—to

make you see *that* for which there is no human voice—the unutterable fervour of my love for you :—for so well do I know your poet nature, that I feel sure if you could but look down *now* into the depths of my soul with your pure spiritual eyes you *could* not refuse to speak to me what, alas ! you still resolutely leave unspoken—you would *love* me if only for the greatness of my love. Is it not something in this cold, dreary world *to be loved* ? Oh, if I could but burn into your spirit the deep—the *true* meaning which I attach to those three syllables underlined ! but, alas ! the effort is all in vain and ‘I live and die unheard.’ . . .

“Could I but have held you close to my heart and whispered to you the strange secrets of its passionate history, then indeed you would have seen that it was not and never could have been in the power of any other than yourself to move me as I am now moved—to oppress me with this ineffable emotion—to surround and bathe me in this electric light, illumining and enkindling my whole nature—filling my soul with glory, with wonder, and with awe. During our walk in the cemetery I said to you, while the bitter, bitter tears sprang into my eyes, ‘Helen, I love now—now—for the first and only time.’ I said this, I repeat, in no hope that you could believe me, but because I could not help feeling how unequal were the heart riches we might offer each to each :—I, for the first time, giving my all at once and for ever, even while the words of your poem were yet ringing in my ears.

“Ah, Helen, *why* did you show them to me ? There seemed, too, so very especial a purpose in what you did. Their very beauty was cruelty *to me*.” . . .

The poem alluded to was one entitled “April Nights,” and had just been returned to Mrs. Whit-

man by the editor of the *Columbian Magazine*, with a request that she would alter a line in the manuscript. The lines were not shown for the special purpose Poe would seem to indicate. The poet's own passionate words will, however, best portray the influence their fair author's personal appearance had upon his mind:—

“And now, in the most simple words I can command, let me paint to you the impression made upon me by your personal presence. As you entered the room, pale, hesitating, and evidently oppressed at heart; as your eyes rested for one brief moment upon mine, I felt, for the first time in my life, and tremblingly acknowledged, the existence of spiritual influences altogether out of the reach of the reason. I saw that you were *Helen—my Helen*—the Helen of a thousand dreams. . . . She whom the great Giver of all good had preordained to be mine—mine only—if not now, alas ! then hereafter and *for ever* in the Heavens.—You spoke falteringly and seemed scarcely conscious of what you said. I heard no words—only the soft voice more familiar to me than my own. . . .

“Your hand rested within mine and my whole soul shook with a tremulous ecstasy: and then, but for the fear of grieving or wounding you, I would have fallen at your feet in as pure—in as real a worship as was ever offered to Idol, or to God.

“And when, afterwards, on those two successive evenings of all-heavenly delight, you passed to and fro about the room—now sitting by my side, now far away, now standing with your hand resting on the back of my chair, while the

preternatural thrill of your touch vibrated even through the senseless wood into my heart—while you moved thus restlessly about the room—as if a deep sorrow or a most profound joy haunted your bosom—my brain reeled beneath the intoxicating spell of your presence, and it was with no merely human senses that I either saw or heard you. It was my soul only that distinguished you there. . . .

“Let me quote to you a passage from your letter:— . . . ‘Although my reverence for your intellect and my admiration for your genius make me feel like a child in your presence you are not perhaps aware that I am many years older than yourself.’ . . . But grant that what you urge were even true. Do you not feel in your inmost heart of hearts that the ‘Soul love’ of which the world speaks so often and so idly is, in this instance, at least, but the veriest—the most absolute of realities? Do you not—I ask it of your reason, *darling*, not less than of your heart—do you not perceive that it is my diviner nature—my spiritual being which burns and pants to commingle with your own? Has the soul age, Helen? Can Immortality regard Time? Can that which began never and shall never end consider a few wretched years of its incarnate life? Ah, I could *almost* be angry with you for the unwarranted wrong you offer to the sacred reality of my affection.

“And how *am* I to answer what you say of your personal appearance? Have I not *seen* you, Helen? Have I not heard the more than melody of your voice? Has not my heart ceased to throb beneath the magic of your smile? Have I not held your hand in mine and looked steadily into your soul through the crystal Heaven of your eyes? Have I done all these things?—Or do I dream?—Or am I mad?

“Were you indeed all that your fancy, enfeebled and per-

verted by illness, tempts you to suppose you are, still, life of my life! I would but love you—but worship you the more. But as it is what can I—what *am* I to say? *Who* ever spoke of you without emotion—without praise? *Who ever* saw you and did not love?

“But now a deadly terror oppresses me; for I too clearly see that these objections, so groundless—so futile. . . . I tremble lest they but serve to mask others more real, and which you hesitate—perhaps in pity—to confide to me.

“Alas! I too distinctly perceive, also, that in no instance you have ever permitted yourself to say that you love me. You are aware, sweet Helen, that on my part there are insuperable reasons forbidding me to urge upon you my love. Were I not poor—had not my late errors and reckless excesses justly lowered me in the esteem of the good—were I wealthy, or could I offer you worldly honours—ah then—then—how proud would I be to persevere—to *plead* with you for your love. . . .

“Ah, Helen! my soul!—what is it that I have been saying to you?—to what madness have I been urging you?—I, who am *nothing* to you—you who have a dear mother and sister to be blessed by your life and love. But ah, darling! if I *seem* selfish, yet believe that I truly, *truly* love you, and that it is the most spiritual love that I speak, even if I speak it from the depths of the most passionate of hearts. Think—oh, think for *me*, Helen, and for yourself. . . .

“I would comfort you—soothe you—tranquillize you. You would rest from care—from all worldly perturbation. You would get better and finally well. And if *not*, Helen—if you *died*—then, at least, I would clasp your dear hand in death, and willingly—oh, *joyfully—joyfully* go down with you into the night of the grave.

“Write soon—soon—oh soon!—but not *much*. Do not weary or agitate yourself for *my* sake. Say to me those coveted words that would turn Earth into Heaven.”

The correspondence thus inaugurated was continued by equally characteristic communications from Poe. In a letter dated the 18th October, occur these passages :—

“You do not love me, or you would have felt too thorough a sympathy with the sensitiveness of my nature, to have so wounded me as you have done with this terrible passage of your letter :—

“‘How often I have heard it said of you, “He has great intellectual power, but no principle—no moral sense.”’

“Is it possible that such expressions as these could have been repeated to me—to me—by one whom I loved—ah, whom I *love* ! . . .

“By the God who reigns in Heaven, I swear to you that my soul is incapable of dishonor—that, with the exception of occasional follies and excesses which I bitterly lament but to which I have been driven by intolerable sorrow, and which are hourly committed by others without attracting any notice whatever—I can call to mind no act of my life which would bring a blush to my cheek—or to yours. If I have erred at all in this regard, it has been on the side of what the world would call a Quixotic sense of the honorable—of the chivalrous. The indulgence of this sense has been the true voluptuousness of my life. It was for this species of luxury that in early youth I deliberately threw away from me a large fortune rather than endure a trivial wrong. Ah, how profound is my love for you, since it

forces me into these egotisms, for which you will inevitably despise me ! . . .

“For nearly three years I have been ill, poor, living out of the world ; and thus, as I now painfully see, have afforded opportunity to my enemies to slander me in private society without my knowledge, and thus with impunity. Although much, however, may (and, I now see, must) have been said to my discredit, during my retirement, those few who, knowing me well, have been steadfastly my friends, permitted nothing to reach my ears—unless in one instance of such a character that I could appeal to a court of justice for redress.

“I replied to the charge fully in a public newspaper—afterwards suing the *Mirror* (in which the scandal appeared), obtaining a verdict and recovering such an amount of damages as, for the time, completely to break up that journal. And you ask me *why* men so *misjudge* me—*why* I have enemies. If your knowledge of my character and of my career does not afford you an answer to the query, at least it does not become *me* to suggest the answer. Let it suffice that I have had the audacity to remain poor that I might preserve my independence—that, nevertheless, in letters, to a certain extent and in certain regards, I have been ‘successful’—that I have been a critic—an unscrupulously honest and no doubt in many cases a bitter one—that I have uniformly attacked—where I attacked at all—those who stood highest in power and influence—and that—whether in literature or society, I have seldom refrained from expressing, either directly or indirectly, the pure contempt with which the pretensions of ignorance, arrogance, or imbecility inspire me. And you who know all this—you ask me *why* I have enemies. Ah, I have a hundred friends for every

individual enemy, but has it ever occurred to you that you do not live among my friends?

"Had you read my criticisms generally, you would see why all those whom you know best know me least and are my enemies. Do you not remember with how deep a sigh I said to you. . . . 'My heart is heavy, for I see that your friends are not my own?' . . .

"But the cruel sentence in your letter would not—*could* not so deeply have wounded me, had my soul been first strengthened by those assurances of your love which I so wildly—so vainly—and, I now feel, so presumptuously entreated. That our souls are one, every line which you have ever written asserts—but our hearts do *not* beat in unison.

"That many persons, in your presence, have declared me wanting in honor appeals irresistibly to an instinct of my nature—an instinct which *I feel* to be honor, let the dishonorable say what they may, and forbids me, under such circumstances, to insult you with my love. . . .

"Forgive me, best and only-beloved Helen, if there be bitterness in my tone. Towards *you* there is no room in my soul for any other sentiment than devotion. It is Fate only which I accuse. It is my own unhappy nature." . . .

Before Mrs. Whitman had answered this indignant protest, Poe went to Providence and entreated her to forgive his waywardness and his reproaches, and to remember only the reasons which he had urged why she should confide her future welfare and happiness to him. Finally, he urged her to defer her decision for a week, and exacted a promise that she would

write to him at Lowell, previous to his return to New York, implying that his return *vid* Providence would depend upon the tenor of her letter. Unwilling to say the word which might separate them for ever, and unable to give him the answer he besought her to accord him, Mrs. Whitman delayed writing from day to day. At last she sent a brief and indecisive note which perplexed Poe; by return he wrote to say that he should be at Providence the following evening. Thither he went, but instead of going to Mrs. Whitman's returned in a terribly depressed state to Boston, and, by an abortive attempt at suicide—particulars of which will be elsewhere given*—reduced himself to a truly deplorable condition. Early the following Monday the hapless poet again arrived in Providence, and on the morning of that day called on Mrs. Whitman. Agitated and unnerved on account of his having failed to call on the Saturday evening, as promised in his letter, she had passed a restless night and was then quite unable to see him, but sent word by a servant that she would see him at noon. He returned a message to the effect that he had an engagement and must see her at once. Eventually he asked for writing-paper and sent her the following note:—

“DEAREST HELEN—I have *no* engagement, but am *very* ill

* *Vide* vol. ii., p. 193.

—so much so that I must go home if possible—but if you say ‘Stay,’ I will try and do so. If you cannot see me—write me *one word* to say that you *do* love me and that, *under all circumstances*, you will be mine.

“Remember that these coveted words you have never yet spoken—and, nevertheless, I have not reproached you. If you can see me, even for a few moments, do so—but if not, write or send some message which will comfort me.”

Mrs. Whitman wrote that she would positively see him at noon. He called, and on that and the following day “endeavoured with all the eloquence which he could exert with such matchless power,” to persuade her to marry him at once and return with him to New York. When Poe called on the second day Mrs. Whitman showed him some letters she had received, in which her correspondents strongly expostulated with her for receiving the poet’s addresses. One of these communications contained the passage that called forth the words of indignant protest which have already been cited from his letter of the 18th of October. Directly he had read the letter some casual visitors arrived, and he arose to take his departure. “I saw by the expression of his countenance,” said Mrs. Whitman, “as he held my hand for a moment, in taking leave of me, that something had strangely moved him. I said, ‘We shall see you this evening?’ He merely bowed without replying.”

That evening, as was but natural to have foreseen, Poe sent Mrs. Whitman a note of renunciation and farewell, therein remarking that if they met again it would be as strangers.

Instead of returning to New York immediately, as in his note he had avowed his intention to do, Poe passed a night of wild delirium at the hotel in Providence. In the morning he arrived at Mrs. Whitman's residence, in a state of delirious excitement, calling upon her and imploring her to save him from some terrible impending doom. The tones of his voice rang through the house and were most appalling. "Never have I heard anything so awful," records Mrs. Whitman, "awful even to sublimity. It was long before I could nerve myself to see him. My mother was with him more than two hours before I entered the room. He hailed me as an angel sent to save him from perdition. . . . In the afternoon he grew more composed and my mother sent for Dr. Okie, who, finding symptoms of cerebral congestion, advised his removal to the house of his friend, Mr. Pabodie, where he was kindly cared for.

Q | "Of course," continues Mrs. Whitman, "gossip held high carnival over these facts, which were related, doubtless, with every variety of sensational embellishment. You will see, therefore, that Griswold had ample material to work on; he had only to turn the

sympathising physician into a police officer, and the day before the betrothal into the evening before the bridal, to make out a plausible story."

The ultimate result of this terrible scene was that Mrs. Whitman decided upon becoming the wife of Poe, in the hope of being enabled to preserve him from his impending doom. Some days after the recovery from his delirium, when he again urged his suit, she permitted him to extract from her a promise that she would become his wife, upon condition that he never touched intoxicants again, declaring that nothing save his own infirmity should cause her to recede from her plighted troth. It was in commemoration of this, and of the terrible trial through which she had just passed, that Mrs. Whitman composed her lines to "Arcturus," beginning,—

"Star of resplendent front ! thy glorious eye
Shines on me still from out yon clouded sky—
Shines on me through the horrors of a night
More drear than ever fell o'er day so bright,"—

and ending, *—

"I see the dawn of a diviner day,
A heaven of joys and hopes that cannot die—
Immortal in their own infinity."

Notwithstanding the heartrending representations of her mother and friends, Mrs. Whitman resolved to

* In version given to me by Mrs. Whitman.—J. H. I.
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adhere to her promise, and in reliance upon it Poe returned to New York, to make arrangements for his marriage. On his homeward journey, by means of the Long Island Sound Boat, he sent the following note to prove that he was keeping *his* word:—

“November 14, 1848.

“MY OWN DEAREST HELEN,—So kind, so true, so generous—so unmoved by all that would have moved one who had been less than angel:—beloved of my heart, of my imagination, of my intellect—life of my life—soul of my soul—dear, dearest Helen, how shall I ever thank you as I ought.

“I am calm and tranquil, and but for a strange shadow of coming evil which haunts me I should be happy. That I am not supremely happy, even when I feel your dear love at my heart, terrifies me. What can this mean?

“Perhaps, however, it is only the necessary reaction after such terrible excitements.

“It is five o'clock, and the boat is just being made fast to the wharf. I shall start in the train that leaves New York at 7 for Fordham. I write this to show you that I have not *dared* to break my promise to you. And now dear, dearest Helen, be true to me.”. . .

During the brief period of visionary anticipations which now intervened, Poe confided his hopes and fears, his expected triumphs or foreboded troubles, to Mrs. Whitman, in a series of idiosyncratic epistles, which, says their recipient, “enable one to understand, as nothing else could, the singular and complex elements of his nature. The intense superstition, the

haunting dread of evil, the tender remorseful love, the prophetic imagination—now proud and exultant, now melancholy and ominous—the keen susceptibility to blame, the sorrowful and indignant protest against unjust reproach.”

In one of the letters to Mrs. Whitman appertaining to this epoch the following passages occur:—

“Without well understanding *why*, I had been led to fancy you ambitious. . . . It was then only—then when I thought of *you*—that I dwelt exultingly upon what I felt that I could accomplish in Letters and in Literary influence—in the widest and noblest field of human ambition. . . . When I saw you, however—when I touched your gentle hand—when I heard your soft voice, and perceived how greatly I had misinterpreted your womanly nature—these triumphant visions melted sweetly away in the sunshine of a *love* ineffable, and I suffered my imagination to stray with you, and with the few who love us both, to the banks of some quiet river, in some lovely valley of our land.

“Here, not *too* far secluded from the world, we exercised a taste controlled by no conventionalities, but the sworn slave of a natural art, in the building for ourselves of a cottage which no human being could ever pass without an ejaculation of wonder at its strange, weird, and incomprehensible yet most simple beauty. Oh, the sweet and gorgeous, but not often rare flowers in which we half buried it! the grandeur of the magnolias and tulip-trees which stood guarding it—the luxurious velvet of its lawn—the lustre of the rivulet that ran by the very door—the tasteful yet quiet comfort of the interior—the music—the books—the unosten-

tatious pictures, and, above all, the love—the love that threw an unfading *glory* over the whole! . . . Alas! all is now a dream.”

In this letter was shadowed forth the ideal pastoral home that, subsequently, was more fully depicted in “Landor’s Cottage.” In the next extract from the correspondence Poe is seen striving to arouse Mrs. Whitman’s temperament into accordance with another mood of his impulsive nature. Writing on Sunday, the 22nd of November, he says:—

“I wrote you yesterday, sweet Helen, but through fear of being too late for the mail omitted some things I wished to say. I fear, too, that my letter must have seemed cold—perhaps even harsh or selfish—for I spoke nearly altogether of my own griefs. Pardon me, *my* Helen, if not for the love I bear you, at least for the sorrows I have endured—more I believe than have often fallen to the lot of man. How much have they been aggravated by my consciousness that, in too many instances, they have arisen from my own culpable weakness or childish folly! My sole hope now is *in you*, Helen. As you are true to me or fail me, so do I live or die. . . .

“Was I right, dearest Helen, in my first impression of you?—you know I have implicit faith in first impressions—was I right in the impression that you are ambitious? If so, and *if you will have faith in me*, I can and will satisfy your wildest desires. It would be a glorious triumph, Helen, for *us*—for *you and me*.

“I dare not trust my schemes to a letter—nor indeed have I time even to hint at them here. When I see you I will

explain all—as far, at least, as I dare explain *all* my hopes even to you.

“Would it *not* be ‘glorious,’ darling, to establish, in America, the sole unquestionable aristocracy—that of intellect—to secure its supremacy—to lead and to control it? All this I can do, Helen, and will—if you bid me—and aid me.”

But these aerial *chateaux d’Espagne* of the poet were even more transient than the few brief interludes permitted him of undisturbed happiness.

Those who have thus far followed the history of Poe’s career will fully comprehend the force of his allusions in the following letter—a letter that really contains the basis of Griswold’s degrading fabrication of the poet having “borrowed fifty dollars from a distinguished literary woman of South Carolina,” and when asked for the money’s return, or a written acknowledgment of his indebtedness, for the satisfaction of the lady’s husband, “denied all knowledge of it, and threatened to exhibit a correspondence which would make the woman infamous.” The woman referred to is dead, but the story has recently been unearthed, and her name dragged before the public by certain papers of New York, in which city, however, still resides one who knew and can testify to Poe’s veracity in this affair. All the wrong *he* did was—when goaded by her imputations as to the impropriety of his corresponding with a married lady—with

his wife's dear friend, Mrs. Osgood—to hastily exclaim, “She had better look to her own letters!” Only that and nothing more.*

This communication is dated two days later than the one last quoted:—

“In little more than a fortnight, dearest Helen, I shall once again clasp you to my heart:—until then I forbear to agitate you by speaking of my wishes—of my hopes, and especially of my fears. You say that all depends on my own firmness. If this be so, all is safe—for the terrible agony which I have so lately endured—an agony known only to my God and to myself—seems to have passed my soul through fire and purified it from all that is weak. Henceforward I am strong:—this those who love me shall see—as well as those who have so relentlessly endeavoured to ruin me. It needed only some such trials as I have just undergone, to make me what I was born to be, by making me conscious of my own strength.—But all does *not* depend, dear Helen, upon my firmness—all depends upon the sincerity of your love.

“You allude to your having been ‘tortured by reports which have all since been explained to your entire satisfaction.’ On this point my mind is fully made up. I will rest neither by night nor by day until I bring those who have slandered me into the light of day—until I expose them, *and their motives* to the public eye. I *have* the means and I will ruthlessly employ them. On one point let me caution you, *dear Helen*. No sooner will Mrs. E—— hear of my proposals to yourself, than she will set in operation every conceivable chicanery to frustrate me:—and, if you are not

† *Vide* vol. ii. pp. 70, 71.

prepared for her arts, she will *infallibly* succeed—for her whole study, throughout life, has been the gratification of her malignity by such means as any other human being would die rather than adopt. You will be sure to receive anonymous letters so skilfully contrived as to deceive the most sagacious. You will be called on, possibly, by persons whom you never heard of, but whom she has instigated to call and vilify me—without even *their* being aware of the influence she has exercised. I do not know *any* one with a more *acute* intellect about such matters than Mrs. Osgood—yet even she was for a long time completely blinded by the arts of this fiend, and simply because her generous heart could not conceive how any woman could stoop to machinations at which the most degraded of the fiends would shudder. I will give you here but one instance of her baseness, and I feel that it will suffice. When, in the heat of passion” . . .

[Here follows the narrative given at pp. 70, 71, chapter the sixteenth.] The letter then proceeds:—

“If you value your happiness, Helen, beware of this woman! She did not cease her persecutions here. My poor Virginia was continually tortured (although not deceived) by her anonymous letters, and on her deathbed declared that Mrs. E—— had been her murderer. Have I not a right to hate this fiend and to caution you against her? You will now comprehend what I mean in saying that the *only* thing for which I found it impossible to forgive Mrs. Osgood was her reception of Mrs E.

“*Be careful of your health, dearest Helen, and perhaps all will yet go well. Forgive me that I let these wrongs prey upon me—I did not so bitterly feel them until they threat-*

ened to deprive me of you . . . but for your dear sake I will endeavor to be calm.

"Your lines 'To Arcturus' are truly beautiful."

This letter was speedily followed by the poet himself. He arrived in Providence full of the most sanguine hopes ; he had proposed to himself a career of literary success, dwelling with enkindling enthusiasm upon his long-cherished scheme of establishing a magazine that should give him supreme control of intellectual society in America. His dreams of love and triumph were rapidly destroyed. In a few days he was to be married ; he had advised his aunt, Mrs. Clemm, to expect his and his bride's arrival in New York early the following week, when information was given to Mrs. Whitman and to her relatives that he had violated the solemn pledge of abstinence so recently given. Whether this information was true no one living, perchance, can say. When he arrived at the dwelling of Mrs. Whitman, "no token of the infringement of his promise was visible in his appearance or manner," says that lady, "but I was at last convinced that it would be in vain longer to hope against hope. I knew that he had irrevocably lost the power of self-recovery. . . . Gathering together some papers which he had intrusted to my keeping I placed them in his hands without a word of explanation or reproach, and, utterly worn out and exhausted

by the mental conflicts and anxieties and responsibilities of the last few days, I drenched my handkerchief with ether and threw myself on a sofa, hoping to lose myself in utter unconsciousness. Sinking on his knees beside me, he entreated me to speak to him—to speak *one* word, but *one* word. At last I responded, almost inaudibly, ‘What can I say?’ ‘Say that you love me, Helen.’ ‘*I love you.*’ These were the last words I ever spoke to him.”

In company with his friend, Mr. Pabodie, Poe left the house, and for ever. The rupture of the much-commented-upon engagement gave rise to the wildest and most scandalous reports. The cause of the separation was almost universally ascribed to the poet. Unable to rest under the ridiculous and humiliating charges, which obtained such general currency that even some of his dearest friends at last gave credence to them, Poe wrote to Mrs. Whitman earnestly entreating her to send him a few words, for the satisfaction of those dear to him, in denial of the vile rumours about their separation.

“No amount of provocation,” he wrote to her, “shall induce me to speak ill of *you*, even in my own defence. If to shield myself from calumny, however undeserved, or however unendurable, I find a need of resorting to explanations that might condemn or pain you, most solemnly do I assure you that I will patiently endure such calumny, rather than avail myself of any such means of refuting it. You will see,

then, that so far I am at your mercy—but in making you such assurances, have I not a right to ask of you some forbearance in return? . . . That *you* have in any way countenanced this pitiable falsehood, I do not and cannot believe—some person, equally your enemy and mine, has been its author—but what I beg of you is, to write me at once a few lines in explanation—you know, of course, that by reference either to Mr. Pabodie or . . . I can disprove the facts stated in the most satisfactory manner—but there can be no need of disproving what I feel confident was never asserted *by you*—your simple disavowal is all that I wish—You will, of course, write me immediately on receipt of this. . . . Heaven knows that I would shrink from wounding or grieving you! . . . May Heaven shield you from all ill! . . . Let my letters and acts speak for themselves. It has been my intention to say simply that our marriage was postponed simply on account of your ill-health. Have you really said or done anything which can preclude our placing the rupture on such footing? If not, I shall persist in the statement and thus this unhappy matter will die quietly away.”

“His letter I did not dare to answer,” said Mrs. Whitman.

Evidently Edgar Poe did not know the real cause of the rupture of the engagement, and for upwards of thirty years his character has suffered under charges he was powerless to refute.

CHAPTER XX.

"ANNIE."

It will now be necessary to turn back some months, to resume the poet's story where it was broken off in order to complete the episodical narrative of his engagement to Mrs. Whitman. In the early summer of 1848 Poe, as already stated, lectured at Lowell, on "The Female Poets of America." Some months later he again visited the city and lectured upon "The Poetic Principle." During this sojourn in the "American Manchester," the poet was the guest of the Richmonds, a family whose acquaintance he had made upon the occasion of his former visit. The friendship which Poe formed with this amiable family, although, unfortunately, so near the close of his sad career, was one of its brightest incidents: they aided him in the darkest days of his "lonesome latter years;" they believed in him when he was calumniated; they received him as an honoured guest when the world contemned him; they remained faithful to him through all adversity; and, when death released

his wearied spirit, afforded a lengthy and hospitable shelter to his broken-hearted mother, Mrs. Clemm.

Miss Heywood, a member of this generous family, has favoured us with some fresh and charming recollections of Edgar Poe, as he appeared to her girlish but appreciative ken :—

“I have ‘in my mind’s eye,’” she remarks, “a figure somewhat below medium height, perhaps, but so perfectly proportioned, and crowned with such a noble head, so regally carried, that, to my girlish apprehension, he gave the impression of commanding stature. Those clear sad eyes seemed to look from an eminence, rather than from the ordinary level of humanity, while his conversational tone was so low and deep, that one could easily fancy it borne to the ear from some distant height. I saw him first in Lowell, and there heard him give a Lecture on Poetry, illustrated by readings and recitations. His manner of rendering some of the selections constituted my only remembrance of the evening : it fascinated me, although he gave no attempt at dramatic effect. Everything was rendered with pure intonation and perfect enunciation, marked attention being paid to the rhythm : he almost *sang* the more musical versifications. I recall more perfectly than anything else, the modulations of his smooth baritone voice, as he recited the opening lines of Byron’s ‘Bride of Abydos’—‘Know ye the land where the cypress and myrtle’—measuring the dactylic movement as perfectly as if he were scanning it : the effect was very pleasing. He insisted strongly upon an even metrical flow in versification, and said that hard and ‘unequally stepping poetry’

had better be done into prose. He made no selections of a humorous character, either in his public or parlour readings ; indeed, anything of that kind seems entirely incompatible with *his* personality. He smiled but seldom and never laughed, or said anything to excite mirth in others. His manner was always quiet and grave—"John Brown of Edinboro'" might have characterised it as 'lonely !' In thinking of Mr. Poe in later years, I have often applied to him the line of Wordsworth's Sonnet (on Milton), 'Thy soul was like a star and dwelt apart.'

"I did not hear the conversation at Mrs. Richmond's after the lecture, when a few persons came in to meet him, but I remember that my brother spoke with great enthusiasm of Mr. Poe's demeanour and the grace of his conversation. In alluding to it he always says, 'I have *never* seen it equalled.' A lady in the company differed from Mr. Poe, and expressed her opinions very strongly. His deference in listening was perfect, and his replies were models of respectful politeness. Of his great satirical power his pen was generally the medium ; if he used the polished weapon in conversation, it was so delicately and skilfully handled that only a quick eye would detect the gleam. Obtuseness was always perfectly safe in his presence, although in his capacity of literary critic he gave his victim many a 'palpable hit !'"

"A few months later than this," resumes Miss Heywood, "Mr. Poe came out to our home in Westford. My recollections of that visit are fragmentary, but very vivid. During the day he strolled off by himself, 'to look at the hills,' he said. I remember standing in the low porch with my sister, as we saw him returning, and as soon as he stepped from the dusty street on to the green sward which

sloped from our door, he removed his hat, and came to us with uncovered head, his eyes seeming larger and more luminous than ever with the exhilaration of his walk.

"I recall his patiently unwinding from a nail a piece of twine that had been carelessly twisted and knotted around it, and then hanging it back again on the nail in long straight loops. It was a half-unconscious by-play of that ingenious mind which deciphered cryptographs, solved enigmas of all kinds, and wrote the 'Gold Bug,' and the 'Balloon Hoax.'

"My memory photographs him again," the lady continues, "sitting before an open wood fire, in the early autumn evening, gazing intently into the glowing coal, holding the hand of a dear friend—'Annie'—while for a long time no one spoke, and the only sound was the ticking of the tall old clock in the corner of the room. (I wish I could tell you what he was thinking about during that rapt silence !)

"Later in the evening he recited, before a little Reading Club, several of his own poems; one of Willis's commencing, 'The shadows lay along Broadway' (which he said was a special favourite with him), and one or two of Byron's shorter poems. To *me* everything seemed perfect, though some said more effect might be given to his own unique poems. I suppose his voice and manner expressed the 'Runic rhyme' better than the 'tintinnabulation of the Bells—bells—bells.' That poem was then fresh from the author's brain, and we had the privilege of hearing it before it was given to the world.

"The next morning I was to go to school, and before I returned he would be gone. I went to say 'Good-bye' to him, when, with that ample gracious courtesy of his which

included even the rustic school-girl, he said, 'I will walk with you.' He accompanied me to the door, taking leave of me there in such a gentle, kindly manner, that the thought of it now brings tears to the eyes that then looked their last upon that finished scholar and winning, refined gentleman."

The "dear friend" above alluded to was the lady to whom the poet indited his most melodious poem of "For Annie." "Annie" was one of those "rare and radiant" spirits it was Poe's happiness—amid all his woe—to meet with in his journey through life. With her he carried on a most voluminous and characteristic correspondence during the last year of his eventful life, but, as a considerable portion of it refers to persons who have not yet followed the writer into the "Hollow Vale," only detached portions can be quoted. Poe's letters, as Mrs. Osgood phrased it, "were divinely beautiful," but their tenor is often liable to be miscomprehended, and misrepresented, by those accustomed only to the coldly-conventional manufactured epistles of everyday folk. A spirit kindred to the poet's is, almost, necessary to a thorough comprehension of the passionate gratitude, burning affection, and intense sympathy which Poe felt—for the time at least—for those who "sorrowed for *his* fate," and sought to aid him as he passed by on his life's journey. During the latter years of his career he appeared utterly unable to exist apart from the sympathy and encouragement

of some friend—some unselfish person to whom he could turn for advice—upon whom he might depend for consolation, and to whom he might unveil the darkest mysteries of his mind. After his wife's death he appeared always seeking for such a friend; for Mrs. Clemm, whatever may have been her affection for her son-in-law, was utterly unsuited, both by age and intellect, to supply such a *desideratum*. Mrs. Osgood, Mrs. Shew, and Mrs. Whitman attempted, as has been seen, more or less to befriend the helpless poet, but, as they, one after the other, deemed it necessary to let him go his ways, he sank deeper and deeper into the "Slough of Despond."

At the time when his cravings for sympathy were, doubtless, most urgent, he became acquainted with "Annie," and to her and her family he clung for consolation and guidance more tenaciously than to any other of his many friends. Unfitted, at least in his "lonesome latter years," to take an active part in the world's work, he sought more naturally the society of refined women than that of his own sex, and, like nearly all men of a poetic temperament, being feminine (though not effeminate) in his tastes, therein found his firmest and most congenial friends. The fervour and passion of his impulsive nature may well be gleaned from these extracts of a characteristic letter, dated:—

"FORDHAM, Nov. 16, 1848.

"Ah, Annie, Annie! *my* Annie! what cruel thoughts . . . must have been torturing your heart during the last terrible fortnight in which you have heard *nothing* from me—not even one little word to say that I still lived. . . . How shall I explain to you the *bitter, bitter* anguish which has tortured me since I left you?

"You saw, you *felt* the agony of grief with which I bade you farewell—you remember my expression of gloom—of a dreadful horrible foreboding of Ill. Indeed—*indeed* it seemed to me that Death approached me even then and that I was involved in the shadow which went before him. . . . I said to myself, 'It is for the last time, until we meet in Heaven.' I remember nothing distinctly from that moment until I found myself in Providence. I went to bed and wept through a long, long, hideous night of Despair—When the day broke, I arose and endeavoured to quiet my mind by a rapid walk in the cold, keen air—but all *would* not do—the Demon tormented me still. Finally, I procured two ounces of laudanum, and without returning to my hotel, took the cars back to Boston. When I arrived I wrote you a letter, in which I opened my whole heart to you—to *you*. . . . I told you how my struggles were more than I could bear. . . . I then reminded you of that holy promise which was the last I exacted from you in parting—the promise that, under all circumstances, you would come to me on my bed of death. I implored you to come *then*, mentioning the place where I should be found in Boston. Having written this letter, I swallowed about half the laudanum, and hurried to the Post Office, intending not to take the rest until I saw you—for, I did not doubt for one moment, that Annie would keep her sacred

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promise. But I had not calculated on the strength of the laudanum, for, before I reached the Post Office my reason was entirely gone, and the letter was never put in. Let me pass over—my darling *sister*—the awful horrors which succeeded. A friend was at hand, who aided and (if it can be called saving) saved me, but it is only within the last three days that I have been able to remember what occurred in that dreary interval. It appears that, after the laudanum was rejected from the stomach, I became calm, and to a casual observer, sane—so that I was suffered to go back to Providence.* . . . It is not *much* that I ask, *sweet sister Annie*—my mother and myself would take a small cottage — oh, *so small*—*so very humble*—I should be far away from the tumult of the world—from the ambition which I loathe—I would labor day and night, and with industry, I could accomplish *so much*. Annie! it would be a Paradise beyond my wildest hopes—I could see some of your beloved family *every day*, and you often. Do not these pictures touch your inmost heart? . . . I am at home now with my dear mother, who is endeavoring to comfort me—but the sole words which soothe me are those in which she speaks of ‘Annie’—She tells me that she has written you, begging you to come on to Fordham. Ah, Annie, *is it not possible?* I am *so ill*—*so terribly, hopelessly ill* in body and mind, that I feel I *cannot* live. . . . Is it not *possible* for you to come—if only for one little week? Until I subdue this fearful agitation, which, if continued, will either destroy my life or drive me hopelessly mad.

“*Farewell*—here and hereafter—for ever your own

“EDDY.”

* Where and when he engaged himself to Mrs. Whitman.—J. H. I.

With this heartrending epistle of the impulsive poet was sent the following note from Mrs. Clemm:—

“MY DEAR ANNIE,—God has heard my prayers and once more returned my poor, darling Eddy to me. But *how changed* ! I scarcely knew him. I was nearly distracted at not hearing from him. I knew *something* dreadful had occurred. And oh ! how near I was losing him ! But our good and gracious God *saved* him. The blood about my heart becomes cold when I think of it. I have read his letter to you, and have told him I think it very selfish, to wish you to come ; for I know, my darling child, it would be inconvenient. . . . Eddy has told me of all your kindness to him. God bless you for it, my own darling. *I beg* you will write often. He raved all night about you, but is now more composed. I too am very sick, but will do all I can to cheer and comfort him. How much I felt for you, *dearest*, when I read the awful account of your poor cousin’s death. Have you heard anything of Mrs. L—— since her tragic performance ? I never liked her, and said so from the first. Do tell me all about her.—Good-bye, *dearest*, your own

M. C.

“Nov. 16, 1848.”

A week later, and the poet is found sending this impassioned appeal to his dear friend’s sister:—

“FORDHAM, Nov. 23, 1848.

“If there is any pity in your heart, reply immediately to this, and let me know *why* it is I do not hear from ‘Annie.’ . . . I fancy everything evil : sometimes I even think that I have offended her, and that she no longer

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cares for me. I wrote her a long letter eight days ago, enclosing one from my mother, who wrote again on the 19th. Not one word has reached us in reply. If I did not love your sister with the *purest* and most unexacting love, I would not dare confide in you—but you do know how truly—how *purely* I love her, and you will forgive me. . . . You know also how impossible it is to see and not to love her . . . *so good—so true—so noble—so pure—so virtuous*. Her silence fills my whole soul with terror. Can she have received my letter? If she is angry with me, say to her, that on my knees, I beseech her to pardon me—tell her that whatever she bids me do, I will do—even if she says I must never see her again, or write to her. Let me but hear from her *once more*, and I can bear whatever happens. . . . You would pity me, if you knew the agony of my heart, as I write these words. *Do not fail to answer me at once*. God bless you, my sweet sister—

“EDGAR.”

The next letter would appear to have been written on December 28th, but it is not fully dated. It was accompanied by a letter from Mrs. Clemm, in which she remarked, “I feel so happy in *all* my troubles. Eddy is not going to marry Mrs. W. How much will I have to tell you. . . . All the papers say he is going to lead to the altar the *talented, rich, and beautiful* Mrs. W. . . . but I will tell you all in my next.” Poe’s note reads :—

“*Thursday Morning* —28.

“ANNIE,—My own dear Mother will explain to you how it is that I cannot write to you in full—but I *must* write

only a few words to let you *see* that I am well, lest you suspect me to be ill. *All* is right! . . . I *hope* that I distinguished myself at the Lecture—I *tried* to do so, for your sake. There were 1800 people present, and such applause! I did so much better than I did at Lowell. If *you* had only been there. . . . Give my dearest love to all— EDDY."

Before continuing this correspondence with "Annie" into 1849, it will be as well to take a short glance at the literary work Poe had been performing during the last few months of the expiring year. To *Graham's Magazine*, and the *Southern Literary Messenger*, he continued to contribute his suggestive "Marginalia," and, besides revising and arranging his critical sketches for republication, laboured ceaselessly at his projected journal, the *Stylus*. As a specimen of the lengthy letters he wrote upon this subject, and of his tireless industry—when not disabled, mentally and physically, for work—may be cited the following epistle to the late Mr. Edward Valentine, a relative of his adoptive mother, the first Mrs. Allan:—

"NEW YORK, Nov. 20th, 1848.

"DEAR SIR,—After a long and bitter struggle with illness, poverty, and the thousand evils which attend them, I find myself at length in a position to establish myself permanently, and to triumph over all difficulties, if I could but obtain, from some friend, a very little pecuniary aid. In looking around me for such a friend, I can think of no one, with the exception of yourself, whom I see the least

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prospect of interesting in my behalf—and even as regards yourself, I confess that my hope is feeble. In fact I have been *so long* depressed that it will be a most difficult thing for me to rise—and rise I never can without such aid as I now entreat at your hands. I call to mind, however, that, during my childhood, you were very kind to me, and, I believe, very fond of me. For this reason and because I really do *not* know where else to turn for the assistance I *so much* need at this moment, I venture to throw myself upon your generosity and ask you to lend me \$200. With this sum I should be able to take the first steps in an enterprise where there can be no doubt of my success, and which, if successful, would, in one or two years, ensure me fortune and very great influence. I refer to the establishment of a Magazine for which I have already a good list of subscribers, and of which I send a Prospectus. If for the sake of 'auld lang syne' you will advance me the sum needed, there are no words which can express my gratitude.—Most sincerely yours,

EDGAR A. POE.

"EDWARD VALENTINE, Esq."

Mr. Valentine, whatever feelings of affection he may have still retained for his handsome little favourite of yore, is scarcely likely to have complied *in toto* with the poet's appeal. Much as Poe was admired and beloved by those in immediate contact with him, by those to whom he was personally unknown, or not known through years of estrangement, his public reputation was not of the kind to cause a stranger—as Mr. Valentine now was—to open his

purse-strings very wide. However, some help was, probably, rendered him in this case.

To the September number of the *Literary Messenger* Poe contributed an enthusiastic critique on the writings of “Stella” (Mrs. Lewis), a lady from whom both he and his aunt, Mrs. Clemm, had received much kindness, as their many letters testify. In the two following numbers of the same magazine, appeared the long-promised “Rationale of Verse.” In this work, amongst much that was, in many ways, quite characteristic of its author, were not wanting signs of his intellectual decadence. Whilst his readers will, doubtless, conclude with him, that as yet, none of the grammars have written much, or anything, on the subject of verse worth reading, it is to be feared they will, also, arrive at the conclusion that Poe has, if possible, in this instance, made “confusion worse confounded.” The study of his own harmonious verse will afford better instruction than all the prosodies ever published.

For the forthcoming year the poet agreed to contribute a further series of “Marginalia” to the *Southern Literary Messenger* and *Graham’s Magazine*, and to write the literary notices for a projected publication, to be called the *American Metropolitan*. Of the last named magazine only two numbers were published, and to one of them Mrs. Whitman sent a poem entitled “Stanzas

for Music.”* From these verses, which were intended to meet Poe’s eyes and, in all probability, did come under his notice, their authoress firmly believed the poet was induced to write, as some kind of a response, his beautiful ballad of “Annabel Lee.” Mrs. Whitman’s lines are as follows, the words italicised being those supposed to have more directly suggested Poe’s presumed reply:—

“ Tell him I lingered alone on the shore,
Where we parted, in sorrow, to meet never more ;
The night wind blew cold on my desolate heart,
But colder those wild words of doom, ‘Ye must part !’

“ O’er the dark, heaving waters, I sent forth a cry ;
Save the wail of those waters there came no reply.
I longed, like a bird, o’er the billows to flee,
From our lone *island home and the moan of the sea.*

“ Away—far away—from the dream-haunted shore,
Where the waves ever murmur, ‘No more, never more ;’
When I wake, in the wild noon of midnight, to hear
That lone song of the surges, so mournful and drear.

“ When the clouds that now veil from us heaven’s fair light,
Their soft, silver lining turn forth on the night ;
When time shall the vapors of falsehood dispel,
He shall know if I loved him ; but never how well.”

With whatever feelings Poe may have regarded these lines, he certainly evinced no desire to respond to them, unless “Annabel Lee” be deemed a reply, and during the short remainder of his career omitted

* Subsequently enlarged and published as “Our Island of Dreams.”—J. H. I.

all mention of their writer's name. About this time he sent a somewhat revised version of "The Letter found in a Bottle," published in "Eureka," to Mr. Godey's *Lady's Book*, in which publication it appeared in February 1849, as a tale, under the title of "Mellonta Tauta." It was accompanied by the following letter :—

" *To the Editor of the 'Lady's Book' :—*

"I have the honor of sending you, for your magazine, an article which I hope you will be able to comprehend rather more distinctly than I do myself. It is a translation by my friend Martin Van Buren Mavis (sometimes called the 'Toughkeepsie Seer'), of an odd-looking MS. which I found, about a year ago, tightly corked up in a jug floating in the *Mare Tenebrarum*—a sea well described by the Nubian geographer, but seldom visited, nowadays, except by the transcendentalists and divers for crotchets. Truly yours,

EDGAR A. POE."

It is now necessary to return to the correspondence with "Annie," to whom Mrs. Clemm is found writing on the 11th of January (1849) :—

"The match is entirely broken off between Eddy and Mrs. Whitman. He has been at home *three weeks* and has not written to her once. . . . Dear Eddy is writing most industriously, and I have every hope that we will, in a short time, surmount most of our difficulties. He writes from ten till four every day. . . . We have found out who wrote those verses that we attributed to Grace Greenwood : they were written by Mrs. Welby, of Kentucky. Have you a copy

of them? If so, Eddy says he will be so much obliged to you for them. . . . Eddy wrote a tale and sent it to the publisher, and in it was a description of *you* with the name of the lady, 'Darling Annie.' * It will be published about the 20th of next month, and then I will send it to you. Did you see the lines to Eddy in a new magazine just come out, called the *Metropolitan*? They are by Mrs. Osgood, and very beautiful. . . . Have you seen Lowell's satire, and Mrs. Osgood's letter about the lines? Something about Eddy in both."

Enclosed in Mrs. Clemm's letter was a lengthy epistle from Poe himself, and from it the following extracts may be made:—

"It seems to me *so* long since I have written you that I feel condemned, and almost tremble lest you should have evil thoughts of Eddy. . . . But no, you will never doubt me under *any* circumstances—will you? It seems to me that Fate is against our meeting *soon*. . . O 'Annie,' in spite of so many worldly sorrows—in spite of all the trouble and *misrepresentation* (so hard to bear) that Poverty has entailed on me for so long a time—in spite of *all* this—I am *so, so* happy. . . . I need not tell you, 'Annie,' how great a burden is taken off my heart by my rupture with Mrs. W.; for I have fully made up my mind to break the engagement. . . . *Nothing* would have deterred me from the match but—what I tell you. . . .

"Write to me whenever you can spare time, if it be only a line. . . . I am beginning to do very well about money as

* Apparently the tale referred to, "Landor's Cottage," did not appear until after Poe's death.—J. H. I.

my spirits improve, and soon—*very* soon, I hope, I shall be *quite* out of difficulty. You can't think how industrious I am. I am resolved *to get rich—to triumph*. . . . When you write tell me something about Bardwell. Has he gone to Richmond? or what is he doing? Oh, if I could only be of service to him in *any* way! Remember me to *all*—to your father and mother and dear little Caddy, and Mr. R. and Mr. C. And now good-bye, sister 'Annie!'"

Again, on or about the 23rd of January (the letter is not dated), Poe is found inditing the following communication to his friend :—

"*Faithful* 'Annie!' How shall I ever be grateful enough to God for giving me, in all my adversity, so true, so beautiful a friend! I felt *deeply* wounded by the cruel statements of your letter—and yet I had anticipated nearly all. . . . From the bottom of my heart I forgive her all, and would forgive her even more. Some portions of your letter I do not fully understand. If the reference is to my having violated my promise *to you*, I simply say, Annie, that I have not, and by God's blessing never will. Oh, if you *but* knew how happy I am in keeping it for *your* sake, you *could* never believe that I would violate it. The reports—if any such there be—may have arisen, however, from what I did, in Providence, on that terrible day—you know what I mean :—Oh—I shudder even to think of it. That . . . her friends will speak ill of me is an inevitable evil—I must bear it. In fact, 'Annie,' I am beginning to grow wiser, and do not care so much as I did for the opinions of a world in which I see, with my own eyes, that to act generously is to be considered as designing, and that

to be poor is to be a villain. I must get rich—rich. Then all will go well—but *until* then I must submit to be abused. I deeply regret that Mr. R. should think ill of me. If you can, disabuse him—and at all times act for me as *you* think best. I put my honor, as I would my life and soul, implicitly in your hands ; but I would *rather* not confide my purposes, *in that one regard*, to any one but your dear sister.

“I enclose you a letter for Mrs. Whitman. Read it—show it only to those in whom you have faith, and then *seal* it with wax and mail it from Boston. . . . When her answer comes I will send it to you : that will convince you of the truth. If she refuse to answer I will write to Mr. Crocker. By the by, if you know his exact name and address send it to me. . . . But as long as you and yours love me, what need *I* care for this cruel, unjust, calculating world ? . . . In all my present anxieties and embarrassments, I still feel in my inmost soul a *divine joy*—a happiness inexpressible—that nothing seems to disturb. . . .

“I hope Mr. C. is well. Remember me to him, and ask him if he has seen my ‘Rationale of Verse,’ in the last October and November numbers of the *Southern Literary Messenger*. . . . I am *so* busy, now, and feel so full of energy. Engagements to write are pouring in upon me every day. I had two proposals within the last week *from Boston*. I sent yesterday an article to the *Am. Review*, about ‘Critics and Criticism.’ Not long ago I sent one to the *Metropolitan* called ‘Landor’s Cottage :’ it has something about ‘Annie’ in it, and will appear, I suppose, in the March number. To the *S. L. Messenger* I have sent fifty pages of ‘Marginalia,’ five pages to appear each month of the current year. I have also made permanent engagements with every magazine in America (except Peterson’s

National) including a Cincinnati magazine, called *The Gentlemen's*. So you see that I have only to keep up my spirits to get out of all my pecuniary troubles. The *least* price I get is \$5 per 'Graham page,' and I can easily average $1\frac{1}{2}$ per day—that is \$ $7\frac{1}{2}$. As soon as 'returns' come in I shall be out of difficulty. I see Godey advertises an article by me, but I am at a loss to know what it is. You ask me, Annie, to tell you about some book to read. Have you seen 'Percy Ranthorpe' by Mrs. Gore? * You can get it at any of the agencies. I have lately read it with deep interest, and derived great *consolation* from it also. It relates to the career of a literary man, and gives a just view of the true aims and the true dignity of the literary character. Read it for my sake.

"But of one thing rest assured, 'Annie,'—from this day forth I shun the pestilential society of *literary women*. They are a heartless, unnatural, venomous, dishonorable set, with no guiding principle but inordinate self-esteem. Mrs. Osgood is the *only* exception I know. . . . Kiss little Caddy for me, and remember me to Mr. R. and to *all*.

"I have had a most distressing headache for the last two weeks." . . .

The above unsigned letter was succeeded, early in February, apparently, by the following communication simply dated Thursday —8th:—

"DEAR 'ANNIE,'—My mother is just going to town, where, I hope, she will find a sweet letter from you or from Sarah; but, as it is so long since I have written, I *must* send a few words to let you see and *feel* that Eddy, even when silent, keeps you always in his mind and heart—

* By G. H. Lewes?—J. H. I.

I have been so busy, 'Annie,' ever since I returned from Providence—six weeks ago. I have not suffered a day to pass without writing from a page to three pages. Yesterday, I wrote five, and the day before a poem considerably longer than the 'Raven.' I call it 'The Bells.' How I wish 'Annie' could see it! Her opinion is so dear to me on such topics—on *all* it is everything to me—but on poetry in especial. And, Sarah, too. . . . I told her when we were at W——, that I hardly ever knew any one with a keener discrimination in regard to what is *really* poetical. The five prose pages I finished yesterday are called—what do you think?—I am sure you will never guess—'Hop-Frog!' Only think of *your* Eddy writing a story with *such* a name as 'Hop-Frog!' You would never guess the subject (which is a terrible one) from the title, I am sure. It will be published in a weekly paper, of Boston. . . . not a very respectable journal, perhaps, in a literary point of view, but one that pays as high prices as most of the magazines. The proprietor wrote to me, offering about \$5 a 'Graham page,' and as I was anxious to get out of my pecuniary difficulties, I accepted the offer. He gives \$5 for a sonnet, also; Mrs. Osgood, Park Benjamin, and Mrs. Sigourney are engaged. I think 'The Bells' will appear in the *American Review*. I have got no answer yet from Mrs. Whitman. . . . My opinion is that her mother has intercepted the letter and will never give it to her. . . .

"Dear mother says she will write you a *long* letter in a day or two, and tell you *how good* I am. She is in high spirits at my prospects and at our hopes of soon seeing 'Annie.' We have told our landlord that we will not take the house next year. Do not let Mr. R., however, make any arrangements for us in ——, or W——, for, being poor,

we are so much the slaves of circumstances. At all events we will both come and see you, and spend a week with you in the early spring or before—but we will let you know some time before. Mother sends her dearest, dearest love to you and Sarah and to *all*. And now good-bye, my dear ‘Annie.’—Your own
EDDY.”

On the 19th of the same month the poet is found writing sadly, but proudly, to this esteemed correspondent, to repel some cruel accusations which had been made against him by certain mischief-makers:—

FORDHAM, Feb. 19, Sunday.

MY SWEET FRIEND AND SISTER—I fear that in this letter, which I write with a heavy heart, you will find much to disappoint and grieve you—for I must abandon my proposed visit, and God only knows when I shall see you, and clasp you by the hand. I have come to this determination to-day, after looking over some of your letters to me and my mother, written since I left you. You have not *said* it to me, but I have been enabled to glean from what you *have* said, that Mr. R—— has permitted himself (perhaps without knowing it) to be influenced against me by the malignant misrepresentations of Mr. and Mrs. ——. Now, I frankly own to you, dear ‘Annie,’ that *I am proud*, although I have never shown myself proud to you or yours, and never will. You know that I quarrelled with the L——s *solely* on your account and Mr. R.’s. It was obviously my interest to keep in with them, and, moreover, they had rendered me some services which entitled them to my gratitude up to the time when I discovered they had been blazoning their favors to the world. Gratitude, then, as

well as interest, would have led me not to offend them ; and the insults offered to me individually by Mrs. L—— were not sufficient to make me break with them. It was only when I heard them . . . (speak against) your husband . . . it was only when such insults were offered to *you*, whom I so sincerely and most purely loved, and to Mr. R——, whom I had every reason to like and respect, that I arose and left their house and ensured the unrelenting vengeance of that worst of all fiends, 'a woman scorned.' Now feeling all this, I cannot help thinking it unkind in Mr. R——, when I am absent and unable to defend myself, that he *will* persist in listening to what these people say to my discredit. I cannot help thinking it, moreover, the most unaccountable instance of weakness—of obtuseness—that ever I knew a *man* to be guilty of: women are more easily misled in such matters. In the name of God, what else had I to anticipate in return for the offence which I offered Mrs. L——'s insane vanity and self-esteem, than that she would spend the rest of her days in ransacking the world for scandal against me (and the falser the better for her purpose), and in fabricating accusations where she could not find them ready made? I certainly anticipated no other line of conduct on her part ; but, on the other hand, I certainly did not anticipate that any man *in his senses* would ever listen to accusations from so suspicious a source. . . . Not only must I *not* visit you at L——, but I must discontinue my letters and you yours. I cannot and *will* not have it on my conscience, that I have interfered with the domestic happiness of the only being in the whole world, whom I have loved at the same time with truth and with purity—I do not *merely* love you, 'Annie'—I admire and

respect you even more—and Heaven knows there is no particle of selfishness in my devotion—I ask nothing for myself, but your *own* happiness—with a charitable interpretation of those calumnies which—for your sake, I am now enduring from this vile woman—and which, for your dear, dear sake, I would most willingly endure if multiplied a hundredfold. The calumnies, indeed, ‘Annie,’ do not materially wound me, except in depriving me of your society—for of your affection and respect I *feel* that they never can. As for any injuries the falsehoods of these people can do *me*, make your mind easy about that. It is true that ‘Hell has no fury like a woman scorned,’ but I have encountered such vengeance before, on far higher grounds—that is to say, for a far less holy purpose, than I feel the defence of your good name to be. I scorned Mrs. E——, simply because she revolted me, and to this day she has never ceased her *anonymous* persecutions. But in what have they resulted? She has not deprived me of one friend who ever knew me and once trusted me—nor has she lowered me one inch in the public opinion. When she ventured too far, I sued her at once (through her miserable tools), and recovered exemplary damages—as I will unquestionably do, forthwith, in the case of ——, if ever he shall muster courage to utter a single *actionable* word. It is true I shrink with a nameless horror from connecting my name in the public prints, with such unmentionable nobodies and blackguards as L—— and his *lady*—but they may provoke me a little too far—You will now have seen, dear Annie, how and why it is that my Mother and myself cannot visit you as we proposed. . . . I could not feel at ease in *his* (her husband’s) house, so long as he permits himself to be prejudiced against me, or so

long as he associates with such persons as the L——s. It had been my design to ask you and Mr. R—— (or, perhaps, your parents) to board my Mother while I was absent at the South, and I intended to start after remaining with you a week, but my whole plans are now disarranged—I have taken the cottage at Fordham for another year—Time, dear Annie, will show all things. Be of good heart, I shall never cease to think of you—and bear in mind the *two* solemn promises I have made you. The one I am now religiously keeping, and the other (so help me Heaven!) shall sooner or later be kept.—Always your dear friend and brother,

EDGAR."

From the next communication, unsigned but dated, it is seen that the traducers are still at work. From it these passages may be cited:—

"*March 23, 1849.*

"Will not 'Annie' confide the secrets about Westford? Was it anything *I* did which caused you to 'give up hope'? Dear Annie, I am so happy in being able to afford Mr. R. proof of something in which he seemed to doubt me. You remember that Mr. and Mrs. L—— strenuously denied having spoken ill of you to me, and I said 'then it must remain a simple question of veracity between us, as I had no witness—' but I observed afterwards—'Unfortunately I have returned Mrs. L—— her letters (which were filled with abuse of you both), but, if I am not mistaken, my mother has some in her possession that will prove the truth of what I say.' Now, Annie, when we came to look over these last, I found, to my extreme sorrow, that *they* would not corroborate me. I say 'to my extreme sorrow;'

for, oh, it is so painful to be doubted when we *know* our own integrity. Not that I fancied, even for one moment, that *you* doubted me, but then I saw that Mr. R—— and Mr. C—— *did*, and perhaps even your brother. Well! what *do you think?* Mrs. L—— has again written my mother, and I enclose her letter. Read it! you will find it thoroughly *corroborative of all I said*. The verses *to me* which she alludes to, I have not seen. You will see that she admits having cautioned me against you, *as I said*, and in fact admits all that I accused her of. Now you distinctly remember that they both loudly denied having spoken against you:—this, in fact, was the sole point at issue. I have marked the passages alluded to. I wish that you would write to your relation in Providence and ascertain for me *who* slandered me as you say—I wish to prove the falsity of what has been said (for I find that it will not do to permit such reports to go unpunished), and, especially, obtain for me some *details* upon which I can act. . . . Will you do this? . . . I enclose also some other lines 'For Annie'—and will you let me know in what manner they impress you? I have sent them to the *Flag of our Union*. By the way, did you get 'Hop-Frog'? I sent it to you by mail, not knowing whether you ever see the paper in ——. I am sorry to say that the *Metropolitan* has stopped and 'Landor's Cottage' is returned on my hands unprinted. I think the lines 'For Annie' * (those I now send) much the *best* I have ever written; but an author can seldom depend on his own estimate of his own works, so I wish to know what 'Annie' *truly* thinks of them—also your dear sister and Mr. C——.

* Beginning, "Thank Heaven! the crisis—the danger—is past."—J. H. I.

"Do not let the verses go out of your possession until you see them in print—as I have sold them to the publisher of the *Flag*. . . . Remember me to all."

The tale of "Hop-Frog" above referred to was founded by Poe upon a terrible tragedy related by Froissart, as having occurred in the court of Charles the Sixth of France. The poet appears to have derived his knowledge of the incident from Lord Berner's quaint old English version of the chronicler's story, and in his rendering of the tale he has contrived to attract more sympathy for "Hop-Frog"—for the poor crippled dwarf, notwithstanding his awful revenge, who had no fondness for wine as it excited him "almost to madness"—than Poe's ideal heroes generally obtain.

As regards the lines "For Annie," spoken of and enclosed in the foregoing communication, this letter to N. P. Willis will be of interest:—

"FORDHAM, April 20, 1849.

"MY DEAR WILLIS:—The poem which I enclose, and which I am so vain as to hope you will like, in some respects, has been just published in a paper for which sheer necessity compels me to write now and then. It pays well—as times go—but unquestionably it ought to pay ten prices; for whatever I send it I feel I am consigning to the tomb of the Capulets. The verses accompanying this, may I beg you to take out of the tomb, and bring them to light in the *Home Journal*? If you can oblige me so far

as to copy them, I do not think it will be necessary to say 'From the *Flag*,'—that would be too bad :—and, perhaps, 'From a late — paper' would do.

"I have not forgotten how a 'good word in season' from you made 'The Raven,' and made 'Ulalume,' (which, by-the-way, people have done me the honor of attributing to you)—therefore I *would* ask you (if I dared), to say something of these lines—if they please you. Truly yours ever,

EDGAR A. POE."

Those unacquainted with the intensely grateful nature of the poet towards all those whom he deemed himself indebted to, would be inclined to consider some portions of the above note intended for sarcasm : Poe, however, doubtless did believe that Willis had assisted in making "The Raven" famous, although he could hardly have considered it an honour for himself that "Ulalume" had been fathered upon the author of "Hurrygraphs."

The letter following that last cited is undated and unsigned ; it gives a vivid picture of the horrors the unfortunate Poe was exposed to in his attempt to live by the work of his pen, and of the melancholia by which he was so often oppressed :—

"ANNIE,—You will see by this note that I am nearly, if not quite, well—so be no longer uneasy on my account. I was not so ill as my mother supposed, and she is so anxious about me that she takes alarm often without cause. It is not so much *ill* that I have been as depressed in spirits—I

cannot express to you how terribly I have been suffering from gloom. . . . You know how cheerfully I wrote to you not long ago—about my prospects—hopes—how I anticipated being soon out of difficulty. Well! all seems to be frustrated—at least for the present. As usual, misfortunes never come single, and I have met one disappointment after another. The *Columbian Magazine*, in the first place, failed—then Post’s *Union* (taking with it my principal dependence); then the *Whig Review* was forced to stop paying for contributions—then the *Democratic*—then (on account of his oppression and insolence) I was obliged to quarrel, finally, with —; and then, to crown all, the “— —” (from which I anticipated so much and with which I had made a regular engagement for \$10 a week throughout the year) has written a circular to correspondents, pleading poverty and declining to receive any more articles. More than this, the *S. L. Messenger*, which owes me a good deal, cannot pay just yet, and, altogether, I am reduced to Sartain and Graham—both very precarious. No doubt, Annie, you attribute my “gloom” to these events—but you would be wrong. It is not in the power of any mere *worldly* considerations, such as these, to depress me. . . . No, my sadness is *unaccountable*, and this makes me the more sad. I am full of dark forebodings. *Nothing* cheers or comforts me. My life seems wasted—the future looks a dreary blank: but I will struggle on and ‘hope against hope.’ . . . What do you think? I have received a letter from Mrs. L—, and such a letter! She says she is about to publish a detailed account of *all* that occurred between us, under guise of romance, with fictitious names, &c.,—that she will make me appear noble, generous, &c. &c.—nothing bad—

that she will 'do justice to my motives,' &c. &c. She writes to know if 'I have any suggestions to make.' If I do not answer it in a fortnight, the book will go to press as it is—and, more than all this—she is coming on immediately to see me at Fordham. I have not replied—shall I? and what? The 'friend' who sent the lines to the 'H. J.' was the friend who loves *you* best—was myself. The *Flag* so misprinted them that I was resolved to have a true copy. The *Flag* has two of my articles yet—'A Sonnet to my Mother,' and 'Landor's Cottage.' . . . I have written a ballad called 'Annabel Lee,' which I will send you soon. *Why* do you not send the tale of which you spoke?"

Appended to the above epistle are these few pathetic lines from Mrs. Clemm:—"Thank you a thousand times for your letter, my dear 'Annie.' Do not believe Eddy; he has been very ill, but is now better. I thought he would *die* several times. God knows I wish we were both in our graves—it would, I am sure, be far better."

An intervening communication to "Annie" has been lost, wherein the poet announced his intention of once more visiting the Southern States, in order to obtain aid for his projected magazine—the *ignis fatuus* of his life—both by lectures and by procuring subscribers' names. The next letter, written on the 16th of June, shows Poe on the eve of departure, but—although not unhopefully worded—detained from day

to day by some disappointing circumstances, probably of a pecuniary nature.

“FORDHAM, — June 16.

“You asked me to write before I started for Richmond, and I was to have started last Monday (the 11th)—so, perhaps, you thought me gone, and without having written to say ‘good-bye’—but indeed, Annie, I *could not* have done so. The truth is, I have been on the point of starting every day since I wrote—and so put off writing until the last moment—but I have been disappointed—and can no longer refrain from sending you, at least, a few lines to let you see *why* I have been so long silent. *When* I can go now is uncertain—but, perhaps, I may be off to-morrow, or next day:—all depends upon circumstances beyond my control. Most probably, I will not go until I hear from Thompson (of the *S. L. Messenger*), to whom I wrote five days ago—telling him to forward the letter from Oquawka, instead of retaining it until he sees me. The reason of the return of my draft on *Graham’s Magazine* (which put me to such annoyance and mortification while I was with you) was, that the articles I sent (by mail) did not come to hand. No insult (as I had half anticipated) was meant—and I am sincerely glad of this; for I did not wish to give up writing for *Graham’s Magazine* just yet—I enclose the publisher’s reply to my letter of enquiry. The Postmaster here is investigating the matter, and, in all probability, the articles will be found, and the draft paid by the time you get this. So all this will be right. . . .

“You see I enclose you quite a budget of papers: the letter of Mrs. L—— to Muddy—Mrs. L——’s long MS.

poem—the verses by the 'Lynn Bard,'* which you said you wished to see, and also some lines to me (or rather about me), by Mrs. Osgood, in which she *imagines me writing to her*. I send, too, another notice of 'Eureka,' from Greeley's *Tribune*. The letter of Mrs. L—— you can retain if you wish it.

"Have you seen the 'Moral for Authors,' a new satire by J. E. Tuel?—who, in the name of Heaven, is J. E. Tuel? The book is miserably stupid. He has a long parody of the 'Raven'—in fact, nearly the whole thing seems to be aimed at me. If you have not seen it and wish to see it I will send it. . . . No news of Mrs. L—— yet. If she comes here I shall refuse to see her. Remember me to your parents, Mr. R——, &c.—And now Heaven for ever bless you—

EDDIE.

"I enclose, also, an autograph of the Mr. Willis you are so much in love with. Tell Bardwell I will send him what I promised very soon. . . . My mother sends you her dearest—most devoted love."

Some days later the poet indited the following interesting epistle to an old literary correspondent:—

"NEW YORK, June 26, 49.

"On the principle of 'better late than never' I avail myself of a few moments' leisure to say a word or two in reply to your last letter—the one from Brunswick.

"You have had time to form an opinion of 'Eureka.' Let me know, frankly, how it impresses you. It is accomplishing all that I prophesied—even more.

* "Lines to Edgar A. Poe," in the *Lady's Book*, April 1847.—J. H. I.

"In respect to D——. By a singular coincidence, he is the chief of the very sect of Hogites to whom I refer as 'the most intolerant and intolerable set of bigots and tyrants that ever existed on the face of the Earth.' A merely perceptive man, with no intrinsic force—no power of generalisation—in short, a pompous nobody. He is aware (for there have been plenty to tell him) that I intend him in 'Eureka.'

"I do not comprehend you about my being the 'autobiographer of *Holden's Magazine*.' I occasionally hear of that work, but have never seen a number of it.

"'The Rationale of Verse' appeared in the last November and December numbers of the *Southern Literary Messenger*. In the February number I published (editorially) a review of 'The Fable for Critics'—It is not much. Lowell might have done better.

"I have never written any poem called 'Ullahana.' What makes you suppose I have? I enclose the last poem (of any length) which I have published (*i.e.*, 'For Annie'). How do you like it? You know I put much faith in your poetical judgments. It is from Willis's *H. Journal*. Do you ever see the *Literary World*?

"Touching the *Stylus*: Monk Lewis once was asked how he came, in one of his acted plays, to introduce *black banditti*, when, in the country where the scene was laid, black people were quite unknown. His answer was: 'I introduced them because I truly anticipated that blacks would have more *effect* on my audience than whites—and if I had taken it into my head that, by making them sky-blue the effect would have been greater, why sky-blue they should have been.' To apply this idea to the *Stylus*—I am awaiting the *best opportunity* for its issue; and if by waiting

until the day of judgment I perceive still increasing chances of ultimate success, why until the day of judgment I will patiently wait. I am now going to Richmond to 'see about it'—and *possibly* I may get out the first number next January.

"Write soon and more frequently. I always receive your letters with interest. Cordially your friend,

"EDGAR A. POE.

"Please re-enclose the verses."

Among the friendships Poe made during his last days was that with "Stella," the authoress of "Records of the Heart," and other popular works. She says, "I saw much of Mr. Poe during the last year of his life. He was one of the most sensitive and refined gentlemen I ever met. My girlish poem—'The Forsaken'—made us acquainted. He had seen it floating the rounds of the press, and wrote to tell me how much he liked it: '*It is inexpressibly beautiful*,' he said, 'and I should like much to know the young author.' After the first call he frequently dined with us, and passed the evening in playing whist or in reading to me his last poem."

On the 21st of June the poet wrote to this friend with reference to a projected publication of hers:—

"I have been spending a couple of hours most pleasantly . . . in reading and re-reading your 'Child of the Sea.' When it appears in print—less enticing to the eye, perhaps, than your own graceful MS.—I shall endeavor to do it critical

justice in full; but in the meantime permit me to say, briefly, that I think it well conducted as a whole—abounding in narrative passages of unusual force—but especially remarkable for the boldness and poetic fervor of its sentimental portions, where a very striking *originality* is manifested. The descriptions, throughout, are warmly imaginative. The versification could scarcely be improved. The conception of Zamen is unique—a *creation* in the best poetic understanding of the term. I most heartily congratulate you upon having accomplished a work which will *live*.—Yours most sincerely,

EDGAR A. POE."

"The day before he left New York for Richmond," continues Stella, "Mr. Poe came to dinner, and stayed the night. He seemed very sad and retired early. On leaving the next morning he took my hand in his, and, looking in my face, said, 'Dear Stella, my much beloved friend. You truly understand and appreciate me—I have a presentiment that I shall never see you again. I must leave to-day for Richmond. If I never return, write my life. You can and will do me justice.'

"‘I will!’ I exclaimed. And we parted to meet no more in this life. *That* promise I have not yet felt equal to fulfil."

Mrs. Clemm was with her ill-fated nephew on this occasion, and spent her last few hours with him at "Stella's" house. Notwithstanding the gloomy presentiments which oppressed him he attempted to cheer his poor "mother," and friends, by drawing hopeful

pictures of his ultimate success: "Cheer up, darling mother," he said, "your Eddy will yet be a comfort to you. I now see my future before me." But for all this, Mrs. Clemm records, he "left in such wretched spirits. Before he left home he arranged all his papers, and told me what to do with them *should he die*. When we parted on the steamboat, although he was so dejected, he still tried to cheer me: 'God bless you, my own darling mother,' he said; 'do not fear for Eddy! See how good I will be while I am away from you, and will come back to love and comfort you.'" And with these last words they parted.

CHAPTER XXI.

LAST DAYS.

EDGAR Poe parted from his mother-in-law on the 30th of June, and on the 9th of July the desolate woman wrote to a friend in these terms :—

“Eddy has been gone ten days, and I have not heard one word from him. Do you wonder that I *am distracted*? I fear everything. . . . Do you wonder that he has so little confidence in any one? Have we not suffered from the blackest treachery? . . . Eddy was obliged to go through Philadelphia, and how much I fear he has got into some trouble there; he promised me *so* sincerely to write thence. I ought to have heard last Monday, and now it is Monday again and not one word. . . . Oh, if any evil has befallen *him*, what can comfort me? The day after he left New York, I left Mrs. Lewis and started for home. I called on a rich friend who had made many promises, but never knew our situation. I frankly told her. . . . She proposed to me to leave Eddy, saying he might very well do for himself. . . . Any one to propose to *me* to leave my Eddy—what a cruel insult! No one to console and comfort him but me; no one to nurse him and take care of him when he is sick and helpless! Can I ever forget that dear sweet face, so tranquil, so pale, and those

dear eyes looking at me so sadly, while she said, 'Darling, darling Muddy, you will console and take care of my poor Eddy—you will *never, never* leave him? Promise me, my dear Muddy, and then I can die in peace.' And *I did promise*. And when I meet her in heaven, I can say, 'I have kept my promise, my darling.' . . . If Eddy gets to Richmond safely and can succeed in what he intends doing, we will be relieved of part of our difficulties; but if he comes home in trouble and sick, I know not what is to become of us."

The most reliable account of Poe's deeds for some time after his leaving his Fordham home is that derived from Mrs. Clemm's letters and papers. It was the poet's misfortune that he had to visit Philadelphia on his journey south. There he was either beguiled into taking stimulants, or sought relief from pain in narcotics; whatever may have been the active agent, its influence upon his debilitated frame was most deplorable. For a few days he was utterly insane, and had he not fallen into the hands of friends, would, probably, have ended his days then and there. There is no need to repeat the details of this episode, as they were furnished to Mrs. Clemm; it suffices to repeat her assurance that during his frenzied wanderings, while he deemed himself pursued by some fearsome foes,—“while he was so deranged, he never did aught that was ungentlemanly, much less, that was disgraceful.”

The unfortunate man speedily recovered his reason, and resumed his journey to Richmond. Mrs. Clemm states that she received a letter from him on the 23rd of July, and she remarks, "He writes he is better in health, and rather better in spirits. He is going from Richmond in a few days, to stay with a friend in the country for a short time. A very dear friend in Richmond, Mrs. Nye, wrote to me last week, and promised me to make him stay at her house, and says she will take every care of him; she is a dear kind-hearted creature. But I meet with so little sincerity in this world that I can scarcely trust any one."

When Poe reached Richmond he renewed his acquaintanceship with many old friends, by whom he was introduced to several new ones. He was generally the guest, it is stated, of Mrs. McKenzie, by whom and her husband his sister Rosalie had been adopted. Among the new acquaintances he made at this time was a Mrs. Weiss; who has published some interesting particulars of the "Last Days of Edgar Poe,"* but, in some instances, where not dependent upon her own personal knowledge for facts, she has been greatly misled by erroneous report.

"I was surprised," writes Mrs. Weiss, "to find that the poet was not the melancholy person I had unconsciously

* In *Scribner's Monthly* for March 1878.

pictured. On the contrary, he appeared, except on one occasion, invariably cheerful, and frequently playful in mood. He seemed quietly amused by the light-hearted chat of the young people about him, and often joined them in humorous repartee, sometimes tinged with a playful sarcasm. Yet he preferred to sit quietly and listen and observe. Nothing escaped his keen observation. . . . Though in the social evenings with us, or at Duncan's Lodge, Poe would join in the light conversation or amusement of the hour, I observed that it had not power to interest him for any length of time. He preferred a seat on the portico, or a stroll about the lawn or garden, in company with a friend. . . .

"Among other things, Poe spoke to me freely of his future plans and prospects. He was at this time absorbed in his cherished scheme of establishing his projected journal, the *Stylus*. Nearly all his old friends in Virginia had promised to aid him with the necessary funds, and he was sanguine of success. He intended to spare no pains, no effort, to establish this as the leading literary journal of the country. The plan of it, which he explained in detail, but of which I retain little recollection, was to be something entirely original; and the highest 'genius, distinctive from talent,' of the country was to be represented in its pages. To secure this result, he would offer a more liberal price for contributions than any other publisher. This would, of course, demand capital to begin with, which was all that he required; and of that he had the promise. To establish this journal had been, he said, the cherished dream of his life, and now at last he felt assured of success. And in thus speaking he held his head erect, and his eyes glowed with enthusiasm. 'I must and will succeed!' he said. . . .

"Poe, among other plans for raising the funds so sorely needed, decided to give a series of lectures in Richmond. The first of these ('The Poetic Principle') brought him at once into prominent notice with the Richmond Public. The press discussed him and the élite of society fêted him. With the attention and kindness thus shown him he was much gratified. Yet he did not appear to care for the formal parties, and declared that he found more enjoyment with his friends in the country.

"I can vividly recall him as he appeared on his visits to us. He always carried a cane, and upon entering the shade of the avenue would remove his hat, throw back his hair, and walk lingeringly, as if enjoying the coolness, carrying his hat in his hand, generally behind him. Sometimes he would pause to examine some rare flower, or to pluck a grape from the laden trellises. He met us always with an expression of pleasure illuminating his countenance and lighting his fine eyes.

"Poe's eyes, indeed, were his most striking feature, and it was to these that his face owed its peculiar attraction. I have never seen other eyes at all resembling them. They were large, with long, jet-black lashes,—the iris dark steel-grey, possessing a crystalline clearness and transparency, through which the jet-black pupil was seen to expand and contract with every shade of thought or emotion. I observed that the lids never contracted, as is so usual in most persons, especially when talking; but his gaze was ever full, open, and unshrinking. His usual expression was dreamy and sad. He had a way of sometimes turning a slightly askance look upon some person who was not observing him, and, with a quiet, steady gaze, appear to be mentally taking the calibre of the unsuspecting subject. 'What awful

eyes Mr. Poe has !' said a lady to me. 'It makes my blood run cold to see him slowly turn and fix them upon me when I am talking.'

"Apart from the wonderful beauty of his eyes, I would not have called Poe a very handsome man. He was, in my opinion, rather distinguished-looking than handsome. What he had been when younger I had heard, but at the period of my acquaintance with him he had a pallid and careworn look,—somewhat haggard, indeed,—very apparent except in his moments of animation. He wore a dark moustache, scrupulously kept, but not entirely concealing a slightly-contracted expression of the mouth, and an occasional twitching of the upper lip, resembling a sneer. This sneer, indeed, was easily excited—a motion of the lip, scarcely perceptible, and yet intensely expressive. There was in it nothing of ill-nature, but much of sarcasm."

Among the old friendships Poe now renewed was that with Mrs. Shelton, the Miss Royster of his boyhood's love. He had not been long in Richmond on the occasion of this last visit, before he called upon Mrs. Shelton, now become a widow.

"I was ready to go to church," says Mrs. Shelton, "when a servant entered and told me that a gentleman in the parlor wished to see me. I went down and was amazed at seeing Mr. Poe, but knew him instantly. He came up to me in the most enthusiastic manner and said, '*O Elmira*, is it you?' . . . I then told him that I was going to church; I never let anything interfere with *that*, and

that he must call again. . . . When he did call again he renewed his addresses. I laughed ; he looked very serious, and said he was in earnest, and had been thinking about it for a long time. When I found out that he was quite serious, I became serious also, and told him that if he would not take a positive denial, he must give me time to consider. He answered, 'A love that hesitated was not a love for him.' . . . But he stayed a long time, and was very pleasant and cheerful. He came to visit me frequently, and I went with him to the Exchange Concert Room, and heard him read."

Twice the poet appeared in public on this final visit to Richmond, and delivered lectures on "The Poetic Principle," to large and appreciative audiences. Professor Valentine, brother of the famous sculptor, well remembers the profound impression made by Poe's recitations—especially of Hood's "Bridge of Sighs,"—on these occasions, as well as by his personal appearance. He speaks of the pallor which overspread his face, as contrasted with the dark hair that fell on the summit of his forehead. "His brow," he says, "was fine and expressive ; his eye, dark and restless ; in the mouth, firmness mingled with an element of scorn and discontent. His gait was firm and erect, but his manner nervous and emphatic. He was of fine address and cordial in his intercourse with his friends, but looked as though he rarely smiled from joy, to which he seemed to be a stranger: *that* might be partly attri-

buted to the great struggle for self-control, in which he seemed to be constantly engaged. There was little variation and much sadness in the intonation of his voice, yet this very sadness was so completely in harmony with his history, as to excite on the part of this community a deep interest in him both as a lecturer and a reader.”

This lecture on “The Poetic Principle” was a worthy setting for the sun of Poe’s genius: in it he embodied the theories and *dicta* on Poetry that he had preached and practised ever since his boyhood, illustrating the one and demonstrating the other by recitation of some of the finest specimens of the verse of Shelley, Tennyson, Byron, Hood, Longfellow, Motherwell, and others. It is one of the best of his critical productions, containing the condensation of his most noteworthy remarks on Poesy, and those most worthy preservation.

Twice during this stay in Richmond the poet is said to have succumbed to the temptation which embittered the “lonesome latter years” of his life. Upon each occasion, it is declared that he was tenderly watched over and waited upon, especially upon the second occasion, when, says Mrs. Weiss, “during some days his life was in imminent danger.” Assiduous attention saved him, but it was the opinion of the physicians that *another such attack would prove*

fatal. This they told him, warning him seriously of the danger.

"Dr. Carter relates how, on this occasion, he had a long conversation with him, in which Poe expressed the most earnest desire to break from the thralldom of his besetting sin, and told of his many unavailing struggles to do so. He was moved even to tears, and finally declared, in the most solemn manner, that this time he *would* restrain himself,—*would* withstand any temptation. He kept his word as long as he remained in Richmond."

The unfortunate man did, indeed, strive to emancipate himself from the terrible thralldom in which he was held, even to the extent of subscribing to the rules of a local Temperance Society. He sent the printed slip which was given him on that occasion to Mrs. Clemm, and the poor desolate woman, on the day following its receipt, wrote to an ever-steadfast friend, "The dark, dark clouds, I think, are beginning to break. . . . God of His great mercy grant he may keep this pledge."

Bravely and earnestly the poor fellow strove to keep to his determination, spending his time chiefly among such friends of his childhood as were willing and happy to enjoy his society. "Especially did he enjoy his visits to the Sullys," says Mrs. Weiss, "where, he remarked, 'I always find pictures, flowers, delightful music and conversation, and a kindness more

refreshing than all.'” Robert Sully, the well-known American artist, and Edgar Poe had been school-fellows, and the artist remarked of his old friend, that he “was one of the most warm-hearted and generous of men. In his youth and prosperity, when admired and looked up to by all his companions, he invariably stood by me and took my part. I was a dull boy at learning, and Edgar never grudged time or pains in assisting me. It was Mr. Allan’s cruelty in casting him upon the world, a beggar, which ruined Poe. Some who had envied him took advantage of his change of fortune to slight and insult him. He was sensitive and proud, and felt the change keenly. It was this which embittered him. By nature no person was less inclined to reserve or bitterness, and as a boy he was frank and generous to a fault.”

Amid old friends, who not only remembered the past, but who could think of him, and act towards him, so sympathetically in the present, Poe naturally felt happier than he had done for a long time, but that he, constituted as he was, should frequently suffer from recurring fits of melancholia, seemed unavoidable. His letters at this time were inexpressibly sorrowful in tone, but Mrs. Weiss, in her *Recollections*, says :—

“The only occasion on which I saw Poe really sad or depressed, was on a walk to the ‘Hermitage,’ the old

deserted seat of the Mayo family, where he had, in his youth, been a frequent visitor. On reaching the place, our party separated, and Poe and myself strolled slowly about the grounds. I observed that he was unusually silent and preoccupied, and, attributing it to the influence of memories associated with the place, forbore to interrupt him. He passed slowly by the mossy bench called the 'Lovers' Seat,' beneath two aged trees, and remarked, as we turned towards the garden, 'There used to be white violets here.' Searching amid the tangled wilderness of shrubs, we found a few late blossoms, some of which he placed carefully between the leaves of a note-book. Entering the deserted house, he passed from room to room with a grave, abstracted look, and removed his hat, as if involuntarily, on entering the saloon where in old times many a brilliant company had assembled. Seated in one of the deep windows, over which now grew masses of ivy, his memory must have borne him back to former scenes, for he repeated the familiar lines of Moore :

" 'I feel like one who treads alone,
Some banquet-hall deserted'—

and paused, with the first expression of real sadness that I had ever seen on his face."

Poe now having to visit New York, in connection with the editing and publication of a lady's forthcoming volume of verse, wrote to Mrs. Clemm to inform her of his anticipated marriage to Mrs. Shelton, and also desired her to be prepared to return with him to Richmond, to reside there permanently. Notwithstanding

his projected marriage, Poe's two last letters to Mrs. Clemm were very, very sad, and seemed to have been written with a foreboding that they would be his last. They were replete with anxious expressions for his relative's future happiness, and contained words of tender remembrance for "Annie."

Although Mrs. Shelton does not appear to have definitely engaged herself to Poe, there was, undoubtedly, an understanding between them sufficient to warrant the poet in his belief that he was once more an accepted suitor of his boyhood's love. Previous to leaving Virginia on his journey north, he called on the lady and told her that he was going to New York to wind up some business matters, but that he would return to Richmond as soon as he had accomplished it, although, at the same time, says Mrs. Shelton, he said he had a presentiment he should never see me any more. And in this he was right, for they never met again.

"The evening of the day previous to that appointed for his departure from Richmond," says Mrs. Weiss, "Poe spent at my mother's. He declined to enter the parlours, where a number of visitors were assembled, saying he preferred the more quiet sitting-room; and here I had a long and almost uninterrupted conversation with him. He spoke of his future, seeming to anticipate it with an eager delight, like that of youth. He declared that the last few weeks

in the society of his old and new friends had been the happiest that he had known for many years, and that when he again left New York he should there leave behind all the trouble and vexation of his past life. On no occasion had I seen him so cheerful and hopeful as on this evening. 'Do you know,' he inquired, 'how I spent most of this morning? In writing a critique of your poems, to be accompanied by a biographical sketch. I intend it to be one of my best, and that it shall appear in the second number of the *Stylus*,'—so confident was he in regard to this magazine. Poe expressed great regret in being compelled to leave Richmond, on even so brief an absence. He would certainly, he said, be back in two weeks. He thanked my mother with graceful courtesy and warmth for her kindness and hospitality, and begged that we would write to him in New York, saying it would do him good.

"He was the last of the party to leave the house. We were standing on the portico, and after going a few steps he paused, turned, and again lifted his hat, in a last adieu. At the moment, a brilliant meteor appeared in the sky directly over his head, and vanished in the east. We commented laughingly upon the incident; but I remembered it sadly afterward.

"That night he spent at Duncan's Lodge; and, as his friend said, sat late at his window, meditatively smoking, and seemingly disinclined for conversation. On the following morning he went into the city, accompanied by his friends, Dr. Gibbon Carter and Dr. Mackenzie. The day was passed with them and others of his intimate friends. Late in the evening he entered the office of Dr. John Carter, and spent an hour in looking over the day's papers;

then taking Dr. Carter's cane he went out, remarking that he would step across to Saddler's (a fashionable restaurant) and get supper. From the circumstance of his taking the cane, leaving his own in its place, it is probable that he had intended to return; but at the restaurant he met with some acquaintances who detained him until late, and then accompanied him to the Baltimore boat. According to their account he was quite sober and cheerful to the last, remarking, as he took leave of them, that he would soon be in Richmond again."

Early in October, on the 2nd apparently, Poe left Richmond for New York. He proceeded by boat to Baltimore, which city he reached safely on the morning following his departure. Upon his arrival he gave his trunk to a porter to convey it, it is stated, to the cars which were timed to leave in an hour or so for Philadelphia, whilst he sought some refreshment. What now happened is still shrouded in mystery: before leaving Richmond the poet had complained of indisposition; of chilliness, and of exhaustion, and it is just possible that the increase of these symptoms may have enticed him into breaking his pledge, or into resorting to some deleterious drug. Be the cause whatever it may, it now appears to have become the fixed belief of the Baltimoreans, that the unfortunate poet, while in a state of temporary mania or stupor, fell into the hands of a gang of ruffians who were scouring the streets in search of victims. Wednesday, the 3rd of

October, was election day for Members of Congress, in the State of Maryland, and it is the general supposition that Poe was captured by an electioneering band, "cooped," * drugged, dragged to the polls, and then, after having voted the ticket placed in his hand, was ruthlessly left in the street to die. For the truth of this terrible tale there appears to be too great a probability.

According to the account furnished by Dr. Moran, resident physician of the Washington University Hospital, Baltimore, the unfortunate poet was brought to that institution, on the 7th of October, in a state of insensibility. He had been discovered in that condition, lying on a bench by a wharf, and having been recognised by a passer-by, had been put into a conveyance and taken to the hospital.

"I had meantime learned from him," says Dr. Moran, "and afterward from the porter at the hotel on Pratt Street, then Bradshaw's, now called the Maltby House, that he arrived there on the evening of the 5th; was seen to go to the depôt to take the cars for Philadelphia, and that the conductor, on going through the cars for tickets, found

* It was by no means unusual in those days for unprotected strangers to be seized by electioneering agents, confined in a cellar till wanted, or "cooped," as it was termed, and then drugged and dragged about from poll to poll to vote, the superintending officials registering the votes, apparently quite regardless of the condition of the person personifying a voter.

him lying in the baggage car insensible. He took him as far as Havre de Grace, where the cars then passed each other, or as far as Wilmington, I forget which, and placed him in the train coming to Baltimore. He had left his trunk at the hotel in Baltimore. Arriving on the evening train he was not seen by any person about the hotel when he returned to the city. The presumption is he wandered about during the night, and found a bench sometime before morning to sleep upon on Light Street Wharf, where he was seen and taken from about nine o'clock the next morning."

His cousin, Mr. (now Judge) Neilson Poe, was sent for, and had everything done for the patient's comfort, but in vain. When he recovered his consciousness, the horror and misery of his condition, combined with the effects of exposure, produced such a shock to the nervous system that he never recovered, and about midnight, on the 7th of October 1849, his poor tortured spirit passed away.

On the 9th of the month—on the anniversary of "the lonesome October of his most immemorial year"—the earthly remains of Edgar Allan Poe were consigned to their resting-place in the grave of his ancestors in Westminster Churchyard, Baltimore, in the presence of a few relatives and friends.

Mr. Neilson Poe had a stone prepared to mark his unfortunate kinsman's tomb, but, by a strange fatality, the monument was destroyed before it could be erected, and, in consequence, for upwards of a quarter of a

century the spot remained unnoted and almost unknown. At last, public attention having been strongly drawn to the neglected condition of the poet's grave, a public committee was formed to collect subscriptions towards the erection of a suitable memorial, and, through the exertions of Miss Rice, Mr. Paul Hayne, and others, a marble monument was procured, and, on the 17th of November 1875, unveiled in the presence of a large concourse of people.*

Poe's story, his faults and misfortunes, cannot be better summarised than in these words of Byron's "*Manfred*":—

"Look on me ! there is an order
Of mortals on the earth, who do become
Old in their youth and die ere middle age,
Without the violence of warlike death ;
Some perishing of pleasure—some of study—
Some worn with toil—some of mere weariness—
Some of disease—and some insanity—
And some of withered or of broken hearts ;
For this last is a malady which slays
More than are numbered in the lists of Fate,
Taking all shapes, and bearing many names.
Look upon me ! for even of *all* these things
Have I partaken—and of all these things
One were enough ; then wonder not that I
Am what I am."

* *Vide* Appendix E.

It is impossible to conceive the horror and heart-rending grief of Mrs. Clemm, when the intelligence of Poe's death was conveyed to her. She was awaiting his arrival, to bear her away to her native South, and instead of welcoming an affectionate son—happy in the prospect of anticipated marriage and a prosperous future—she received the tidings of his terrible and mysterious death. In the first moments of her loneliness and anguish she wrote to her best friend, for sympathy, in these terms :—

“ Oct. 8. 1849.

“ANNIE, my Eddy is *dead*. He died in Baltimore yesterday. Annie! pray for me, your desolate friend. My senses *will leave me*. I will write the moment I hear the particulars. I have written to Baltimore. Write and advise me what to do. Your distracted friend,

“ M. C.”

Writing again on the 13th of October to the same faithful friend, Mrs. Clemm says :—

“MY OWN DEAREST ANNIE,—I am not deceived in you, you *still* wish your poor desolate friend to come to you. . . . I have written to poor Elmira, and have to wait for her answer. They are already making arrangements to publish the works of my *darling lost one*. I have been waited on by several gentlemen, and have finally arranged with Mr. Griswold to arrange and bring them out, and he wishes it done immediately. Mr. Willis is to share with him this labour of love. They say I am to have the *entire*

proceeds, so you see, Annie, I will not be entirely destitute. I have had many letters of condolence, and one which has, indeed, comforted me. Neilson Poe, of Baltimore, has written to me, and says he died in the Washington Medical College, not the Hospital, and of congestion of the brain, and not of what the vile, vile papers accuse him. He had many kind friends with him, and was attended to the grave by the literati of Baltimore, and many friends. *Severe excitement* (and no doubt some imprudence) brought this on; he never had one interval of reason. I cannot tell you all now. . . . They now appreciate him and will do justice to his beloved memory. They propose to raise a monument to his memory. Some of the papers, indeed, nearly all, do him justice. I enclose this article from a Baltimore paper. But this, my dear Annie, will not restore him. Never, oh, never, will I see those dear lovely eyes. I feel *so desolate, so wretched, friendless, and alone*. . . . I have a beautiful letter from General Morris; he did, indeed, love him. He has many friends, but of what little consequence to him *now*. I have to go out home—to *his* home to-day, to arrange his papers. Oh, what will I not suffer." . . .

On the 17th Mrs. Clemm writes to say that she has now heard *all* the particulars of Poe's death, and that she has "been very much engaged with Mr. Griswold in looking over his (Poe's) papers," and that Mr. Griswold says, "he must have *all* until the work is published. He thinks I will realise from two to three thousand dollars from the sale of these books, there is so much sympathy and good feeling towards him, except by a few low envious minds. . . . What do you think I must

have suffered when in one of the letters I found some hair of my *lost one* ! . . . *His* hair, taken from that dear head when cold and insensible. . . . I received a letter from poor dear Elmira : oh, how you will pity her when you read it." Then, in alluding to the proffered services of Griswold, the poor befooled woman continues ; "How nobly they have acted ! all done gratis, and you know to literary people that is a great deal. . . . Those gentlemen who have so kindly undertaken the publication of his works, say that I will have a very comfortable income from them."

Within a few days after these and many similar letters equally pathetic were written, Mrs. Clemm went on a lengthy visit to "Annie's" hospitable home. Writing to her step-daughter's husband, Mr. Neilson Poe, on the 1st of November, she acknowledges a kind letter from Willis, that had been forwarded to her ; begs Neilson to forward her the trunk containing Poe's papers, as in it were articles of "great importance to the publishers of his works ;" inveighs bitterly against the poet's sister, Rosalie, for her claim to share in the anticipated proceeds of the projected publication ; furnishes instances of the friendly attentions paid her by well-known literati, and declares that she is "with the kindest friends, who do all in their power to comfort her." Several months passed on smoothly enough, and Mrs. Clemm was comforted

and gratified by the kindly attentions of friends and strangers, who all vied with each other in aiding the poet's "more than mother."

In September 1850, the third volume of Poe's works when published was found to be prefaced by the anxiously looked-for "Memoir"—the "labour of love" of Rufus Griswold. The secret of the man's disinterested aid was soon manifest; never before had so slanderous a collection of falsehoods and libels—so calumnious a product of envy, hatred, and malice—been offered to the public as this "Memoir" of an ill-fated child of genius. The distress and indignation of Mrs. Clemm were intense, and she continually, when alluding to Griswold, writes of him as "that villain." Poe's literary friends gathered round her and promised to expose and refute the slanderous fabrications. "I have received a kind letter from that noble fellow, Graham," she writes at this period, "telling me to *remain quiet*, that he had a host of my Eddie's friends prepared to do him justice, and that he intends to devote nearly half of the December number to the memory and defence of my injured Eddie."

Mr. Graham, and many others who had been personally acquainted with Poe, took up cudgels in his defence, but, as Griswold's "Memoir" prefaced the poet's works, and all refutations and objections were published in the ephemeral pages of periodicals, until

1874 this veritable *scandalum magnatum* remained unexpunged.

Mrs. Clemm continued as a guest at "Annie's" house for some years, when she was invited to "Stella's," where she also spent several years, befriended and introduced to all notable persons. Among distinguished visitors to America who remembered and greeted the poet's venerable mother-in-law, was Charles Dickens, and he generously entreated her acceptance of one hundred and fifty dollars, accompanying the gift with the assurance of his sympathy. Ultimately, the old lady found a retreat in a charitable institution of Baltimore, the "Church Home and Infirmary," and expired there on the 16th of February 1871, having lived long beyond the allotted years of sorrow. In accordance with her own request, her papers and records were placed in the hands of Mr. Neilson Poe, whilst her poor worn-out body was interred beside her beloved Eddy's, in the old ancestral grave of her father, General Poe.

APPENDIX A.

POE'S ANCESTRY.

IN her charming little book on *Edgar Poe and his Critics*, the late Mrs. Whitman contended that the Poe family was of Italian origin. The progenitors of this race, according to the lady's idea, after successive migrations through France, England, and Wales, ultimately settled in Ireland. This theory was based upon the supposition that the Poe and the Le Poer families were identic in origin; but later researches, whilst recognising the great probability, have failed to establish the certainty of this identity, the only *datum* adduced in proof of it being, apparently, similarity of sound—that least trustworthy of all philological evidence. For those, however, who may like to see the testimony proffered by Mrs. Whitman in support of her hypothesis of the Poe and Le Poer families being descended from the same ancestor, the particulars furnished by her said work—together with a few additional items on the same theme, gathered by ourselves for our 1874 *Memoir of the poet*—shall be given. Edgar Allan Poe, says our authority, was descended from an ancient Norman family which settled in Ireland in the reign of Henry II., and “those who are curious in tracing the effects of country and lineage in the mental and constitutional peculiarities of men

of genius, may be interested in such facts as we have been enabled to gather in relation to the ancestry of the poet. The awakening interest in genealogical researches will make them acceptable to many readers ; and in their possible influence on a character so anomalous as that of Edgar Poe, they are certainly worthy of note."

The family of the Le Poers, or De la Poers, was founded by Sir Roger le Poer, one of the companions-in-arms of the famous Strongbow, and of him it was remarked by Geraldus Cambrensis, "It might be said, without offence, that there was not a man who did more valiant acts than Roger le Poer." The race which sprang from this knightly adventurer made itself conspicuous in the annals of Ireland for heroic daring and romantic deeds, as well as for its improvidence and reckless bravery. The chivalrous conduct of Sir Arnold le Poer, seneschal of Kilkenny Castle, "a knight, and instructed in letters," in interposing, at the ultimate sacrifice of liberty and life, to rescue Lady Alice Kytler from the clutches of the ecclesiastics who accused her and brought her to trial for witchcraft, is fully detailed by Geraldus and other chroniclers. "The disastrous civil war of 1327," says Mrs. Whitman, "in which all the great barons of the country were involved, was occasioned by a personal feud between Arnold le Poer and Maurice of Desmond, the former having offended the dignity of the Desmond by calling him a rhymer," little deeming, indeed, that the most famous scion of his own knightly race would glorify the family more by his rhymings than any other member of it would by his swordsmanship.

The Le Poers were involved in the Irish troubles of 1641,

and when Cromwell invaded the country they did not escape his pursuit; their families were dispersed, their estates confiscated, and their lands forfeited to the Commonwealth. Of the three leading branches of the family at the time of Cromwell's invasion, Kilmaedon, Don Isle, and Curraghmore, the last only escaped the vengeance of the Lord Protector, and that, according to Burke, solely by the ingenuity and courage of Alice, daughter of the Lord of Curraghmore. The romantic story of Cromwell's siege of the sea-girt castle of Don Isle, as told by Burke, in his *Romance of the Aristocracy*, is replete with interest. The isolated stronghold was bravely defended by a female descendant of Nicholas le Poer, Baron of Don Isle, and this heroine is always styled, in the traditions of the Power family, "the Countess."

"The family of the Le Poers," remarks Mrs. Whitman, "like that of the Geraldines, and other Anglo-Norman settlers in Ireland, passed from Italy into the north of France, and from France, through England and Wales, into Ireland, where, from their isolated position and other causes, they retained for a long period their hereditary traits with far less modification from intermarriage and association with other races than did their English compeers. Meantime the name underwent various changes in accent and orthography. A few branches of the family still bore in Ireland the old Italian name of De la Poë." "The beautiful domain of Powerscourt," adds this same authority, "took its name from the Le Poers," and through her father, Edmund Power, the late Lady Blessington claimed descent from the same old family. Some branches

of the Power family, it may be remarked, have obtained heraldic sanction for resuming their more ancient patronymic of Le Poer.*

Thus far we have ventured to follow the line of argument suggested by Mrs. Whitman, but it must be confessed that the earliest reliable records do not carry the paternal ancestry of Edgar Allan Poe further back than the middle of the last century; but if his ancestors were descended, as is extremely probable, from the Poës of Riverston (County Tipperary, Ireland), the race may be traced back nearly two centuries earlier. The Poës of Riverston are said to have come from the Upper Palatinate of the Rhine, and for upwards of two centuries have held positions of importance, and have intermarried with various families of the aristocracy. Thomas and William Poë were officers in Cromwell's army, and Captain Thomas Poë, one of these brothers, "obtained grants of lands which were confirmed to him by Charles II. The greater number of his descendants can be traced, and one of them, Parsons Poë, went to America about one hundred and twenty years ago. He was heard from, for a few years after his arrival, but, after a while, nothing further was known of, or heard from him, so his family supposed he had died. He was descended maternally from the 'Percys' and the 'Parsons' of Birr Castle." †

"There is no good reason," says John P. Poe, Esq., of Baltimore, "to suppose that the ancestors of Edgar A.

* Mrs. Whitman was by birth a Power, and liked to consider herself as descended from the same ancestry as Poe.—J. H. I.

† Letter from James Jocelyn Poë, Esq., representative of the Riverston Poës. November 17th, 1875.—J. H. I.

Poe were descended from the Le Poers. John Poe, the progenitor of the family in America, emigrated from the north of Ireland, a number of years before the Revolution, and purchased a farm in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, whence he afterwards removed to Cecil County, Maryland. At the time of the Revolution he was residing at Baltimore. His wife was Jane McBride, believed to be a sister (not a daughter, as frequently stated) of James McBride, Admiral of the Blue, and M.P. for Plymouth in 1785.* John Poe's age is not given, but his wife is said to have died in Baltimore, at the age of one hundred and six, and to have been buried in Westminster Churchyard.†

In an account furnished by Mrs. Clemm (Edgar Poe's aunt) of the poet's ancestry, she states, "My father was born in Ireland, but his parents left there when he was only six weeks old, and he was so patriotic that he never would acknowledge he was any other than an American. He lived in Baltimore from the time of the Revolution; he took my mother there from Pennsylvania, a bride."

David Poe, the son of John, is stated by Mrs. Clemm to have married a Pennsylvanian beauty of the name of Cairnes, and to have removed with her to Maryland, where he settled in Baltimore, and became a prominent citizen, taking part in various patriotic labours, as may be seen by reference to Colonel Scharf's "Chronicles of Baltimore," and other works of research. During the War of Independence David Poe greatly distinguished himself, and received the

* In letter dated May 1st, 1875.—J. H. I.

† E. L. Didier. "Life of Edgar A. Poe," p. 21.

appointment of Quartermaster of the American forces in Baltimore. Mr. Didier states that in this position Poe, when the State funds were exhausted, frequently advanced money from his own private means, and, indeed, rendered such pecuniary aid to the State that he was ultimately ruined through it. Be this as it may, in 1780, and the next few years, he is found to have purchased several lots of land in Baltimore, and to have been, apparently, a man of considerable wealth. Portions of the correspondence of General Poe—as he was usually styled after the war—with various distinguished Americans of the period, have been preserved in the archives of Maryland, and will be found in Colonel Scharf's work. General Poe, despite his foreign birth, was a most ardent patriot, and omitted no opportunity of manifesting his zeal for his adopted nationality. In 1781, when La Fayette halted in Baltimore, on his way to join the army of the South, a ball was given in his honour. During the festivities, it is related that the French general appeared melancholy, and upon being asked the reason of his depression, said that he could not enjoy the gaiety whilst his men were suffering so much for want of clothing. The hint was taken, and the next morning the ball-room was converted into a work-room; the citizens furnishing the needed materials, and the ladies making them up. Mrs. David Poe, it is said, personally cut out and superintended the manufacture of five hundred garments, and her husband gave \$500 towards their cost. For this graceful act of the Baltimorean ladies, La Fayette sent them a letter of thanks, dated July 3rd, 1781, which is duly given in full in Colonel Scharf's "Chronicles." When revisiting

Baltimore in 1824, La Fayette referred in grateful terms to the kindness he and his troops had received from the Poe family, and on learning that General Poe was dead he paid a visit of respect to his widow.

General Poe had several children, the eldest of whom was David Poe, junior, father of the future poet; the second, George, whose descendants still live in Maryland; Stephen, who died on the Jersey Prison Ship during the War of Independence; William, who emigrated to the State of Georgia, where his descendants, one of whom is the Hon. Washington Poe of Macar, have filled many important posts;* and to these may be added, Maria, who became the second wife of William Clemm, a well-known citizen of Baltimore, and mother of Virginia, Edgar Allan Poe's cousin and bride.

Samuel Poe, a notable oddity of Baltimore nearly half a century ago, is also said to have been a son of General Poe. Many of this youth's vagaries are still remembered, and some have even found their way into print. Of one of his practical jokes, a much-esteemed correspondent sends the following amusing account:—"At the time Samuel Poe was a youth, the Baltimorean Germans, who were not many in number, and were rather despised, raised a volunteer company they called '*Die Jäger*,' which was generally referred to as 'the Dutch Yagers.' These honest 'Dutchmen' Poe selected as his especial butts. When they went out parading Poe would muster a lot of mischievous *gamins*, and march in their rear, sometimes giving orders in broken

* Letters from John P. Poe, Esq., of Baltimore.—J. H. I.

English, and sometimes chanting a doggerel canticle of his own composition, of which these are two couplets:—

“ ‘ Ven you hears te great pig trum,
Den you sees te Yagers come ;
Ven tey turns te corner apout,
Den you schmells te sauer kraut.’ ”

“ This doggerel the boys used to sing in chorus, Poe strutting at their head like a drum-major, to the great mirth of the public. When they reached the place of parade Poe would halt his troop (followed by hundreds of spectators), and would burlesque the call of the roll, with the answers or excuses for absence; would inspect the company, would command manoeuvres, &c., all in the wildest burlesque, to the infinite delight of his boys and a malicious public, but to the inexpressible anguish of the poor ‘ Dutchmen.’ At last they could stand it no longer, and had Poe up to court. The charge was preferred, and the court asked Poe what he had to say. The youth, with the greatest gravity, said he was only indulging in a little innocent mirth that harmed nobody and did not disturb the peace; that the boys liked to see the ‘ Yagers’ parade, and he put himself at their head to infuse a little military spirit into them; that as for his song, it was quite inoffensive, as their Honours could judge for themselves when he repeated it. And he then began intoning his famous chant, at which the court fairly broke down with laughter, and dismissed the case.”

APPENDIX B.

WILLIAM HENRY LEONARD POE.

INCIDENTS as romantic and contradictory as those related of his illustrious brother are told of William Henry Leonard Poe. The facts known of his life are few : he was the earliest born child of David Poe, junior, and Elizabeth his wife. The date of his birth is uncertain, but Mrs. Clemm states that he was the first grandchild born to her parents, and that it was for his sake that they became reconciled to his father, their eldest son, with whom they had quarrelled on account of his imprudent marriage and theatrical proclivities. It is very probable that the boy's grandparents adopted the child from its earliest infancy, as is stated by Mrs. Clemm and some of the poet's biographers ; but Mr. E. L. Didier, in his "Life of Edgar A. Poe," says, when "Henry's" parents died, he "was taken to Baltimore, and educated by his godfather, Mr. Henry Didier, whose counting-room he subsequently entered."*

"William," writes Mr. John P. Poe, his cousin, "died early. He was a man of taste and genius, and wrote many fugitive verses, which have been lost, but which are said to have exhibited poetical power of a high order." And again, "The verses of William Poe are said to have had

* Henry was his second Christian name ; he was, apparently, named William, after his father's brother.—J. H. I.

great merit, but we fear there is no prospect of recovering any of them. He died very early."*

Mr. R. H. Stoddard, in a sketch of Edgar Poe's life, states that William Henry Leonard, "is described by those who knew him as possessing great personal beauty, *and as much genius as Edgar!*" (The italics are ours.) "He wrote verses," continues Mr. S., "which were printed in the *Minerva*, a small weekly paper published in Baltimore; he was a clerk in a lottery office in that city; and he was not averse to the flowing bowl. This last circumstance, joined to his rejection as a lover, was probably the cause of his going to sea, and his subsequent 'sailor's scrape' at St. Petersburg—for it was no more—out of which the dangerous and desperate adventure of his famous brother was manufactured." This last allusion is to a story told by Griswold, and his copyists, of Edgar Poe having to be rescued by the American Minister to Russia, "from penalties incurred in a drunken debauch" at St. Petersburg. The entire legend is a fair sample of those fabricated about the famous poet: he never was in Russia, nor, in all probability, was his brother William. Mr. Eugene Schuyler, the well-known author, and formerly Secretary to the American Legation at St. Petersburg, kindly undertook to have the books and papers of the Legation and Consulate in the Russian capital, referring to the only possible period in which the incident could have occurred,† searched for us, and reports, with reference to the alleged

* Letters of May 1st and October 2nd, 1875.—J. H. I.

† From 1820 to 30. During the time that Mr. Middleton was minister.—E. Schuyler.

ministerial intervention, "I find no record whatever of that circumstance."

But William Poe was in the navy, and *might*, therefore, have been to Russia, so it is fairly safe to transfer the anecdote to his shoulders, accordingly, Mr. Didier says of him, "He was very clever, but wild and erratic. Having quarrelled with his patron, Henry (*sic*) Poe determined to go to Greece, and fight for the cause to which the death of Byron had attracted the attention of the world. Young Poe arrived in time to participate in the last battles of the war. On the 14th of September 1829, the Sultan acknowledged the independence of Greece. . . . Poe accompanied the Russian troops to St. Petersburg, where he soon got into trouble and into prison. He was released by the interposition of the Hon. A. Middleton, the American Minister, who had him sent to the port of Riga, and placed on a vessel bound for Baltimore. Six months after returning home, Henry Poe died, at the early age of twenty-six,* leaving behind him the reputation of great but wasted talents."

* Mr. Didier avers that Poe's parents were not married until "the spring of 1806," and within six months after the decease of a former husband of the lady. If such were the case, William Henry Leonard Poe must have been born from two to three years *before* his putative parents' marriage, and could scarcely have had David Poe as his father: it would appear not improbable that Mr. Didier has mistaken some other scion of the family for William H. L. Poe, the poet's brother.—J. H. I.

APPENDIX C.

ROSALIE M. POE.

OF Edgar Poe's sister, Rosalie M. Poe, little need be said. Left by her mother's death a mere baby she was adopted by a Richmond merchant, a native of Scotland, named McKenzie, and brought up in his family. Mr. McKenzie having been ruined by the sudden peace that followed the battle of Waterloo, his sister, described as a most accomplished lady, opened a school in Richmond. This seminary was attended by members of the best families in Virginia, and thither Rosalie Poe was sent, but, although she is averred to have had similar advantages to the other young ladies, she was so hopelessly dull, that she could never attain proficiency in anything, even her handwriting, which is said to have been her strongest point, having been but indifferent. After leaving school Miss Poe continued to reside with various members of the McKenzie family till, at the conclusion of the Civil War, they became unable, or unwilling, to further befriend the unfortunate lady. Miss Poe was utterly incapable of procuring her own maintenance, and, during the last five or six years of her life, was a confirmed invalid. After having endured for some years a precarious existence, dependent upon the assistance of friends, a shelter was ultimately obtained for her in Washington, D. C., where she was admitted into the

Epiphany Church Home, an Episcopalian charitable institution. She appears to have been very fond of her brother Edgar, and proud of his reputation, although, as she stated to us, in a correspondence we had with her a short time previous to her decease, it was not until she "was a good sized girl" that she "knew she had a brother or brothers;" and it was only during the last years of his life that she had any real personal knowledge of Edgar. Some slight record of her eccentricities are contained in Mrs. Weiss's paper on "The Last Days of Edgar A. Poe." Miss Poe died July 1874, aged sixty-four.

APPENDIX D.

LADY FRIENDSHIPS.

DESPITE all the sorrow and misfortune of his brief career it was the frequent good fate of Poe to encounter, and be associated with, high and self-sacrificing women, and, probably, no higher testimony could be cited in favour of his goodness than the enduring and friendly sympathy manifested for him by these ladies. Besides the life-long love of his wife, and the never-wavering affection of Mrs. Clemm, it has been seen during various portions of his story, that he inspired the truest and most disinterested friendship of Mrs. Stannard (the "Helen" of his youth) Mrs. Shelton, his first and last love; Mrs. Shew ("Marie Louise"); Mrs. Osgood; Mrs. Whitman; "Annie"; "Stella," and others.

The reader of Edgar Poe's history cannot but feel interested in the fate of these ladies. Some of them, happily, still dwell among us, whilst others have gone before, and of these latter, Mrs. Osgood, Mrs. Shew, and Mrs. Whitman, it behoves us to speak a few words additional. The career of Frances Sargent Osgood, a lady whom Poe admired with intense and long-lasting affection, has already been adverted to in the preceding pages, it suffices, therefore, to say that although they did not meet for some years prior to the poet's death, her friendship for

him suffered no abatement. Shortly before her decease, which occurred on Sunday, 12th of May 1850, just seven months after Poe's, she wrote the charming recollections cited in this work. About the same time her last and nearest complete volume of verse was published, and its final poem was this :—

“ The hand that swept the sounding lyre
With more than mortal skill,
The lightning eye, the heart of fire,
The fervent lips, are still !
No more, in rapture or in woe,
With melody to thrill,
Ah ! Nevermore !

“ Oh ! bring the flowers he cherished so,
With eager childlike care ;
For o'er his grave they'll love to grow—
And sigh their sorrow there :
Ah me ! no more their balmy glow
May soothe his heart's despair,
No ! Nevermore !

“ But angel hands shall bring him balm
For every grief he knew,
And Heaven's soft harps his soul shall calm
With music sweet and true,
And teach to him the holy charm
Of Israfel anew,
For evermore !

“ Love's silver lyre he played so well
Lies shattered on his tomb ;
But still in air its music spell
Floats on through light and gloom ;
And in the hearts where soft they fell
His words of beauty bloom
For evermore ! ”

The inspiration of these pathetic lines cannot be misunderstood. Portraits of their authoress, and of *her* "Israfil," both painted by Mr. S. Osgood, are on the walls of the New York Historical Society's Library.

Few and simple words are needed to tell Mrs. Shew's subsequent story, for her life has left no ostentatious or monumental emblems, and her memory survives only in her children's love ; her friends' affection ; and in the gratitude of those whose afflictions she comforted, and whose needs she supplied. After having been some years the wife of the Rev. Dr. Roland S. Houghton, she followed her husband rapidly to the grave, "entering into rest," as she herself had aptly styled it, on the third of September 1877.

Mrs. Whitman's name has, probably, been more closely connected with Poe's than that of any lady mentioned in this biography, and yet their personal acquaintanceship was the shortest, and, doubtless, her influence on his career the slightest, of any of those noble women whose names have been grouped around his. The details, as full as could be furnished, have been given of their short-lived intercourse. After the rupture of their engagement, and up till the time of his death, Poe does not appear to have alluded to Mrs. Whitman again, save in the most conventional manner ; but the lady always cherished, with unfading affection, the memory of her connection with the poet. In her delightful correspondence and conversation, in her melodious song, and, above all, in her truly beautiful little monograph on "Edgar Poe and his Critics," Mrs. Whitman invariably contrived to bring more prominently

forward the brighter *traits* of her hero's character than has been accomplished by any other person—by any other means.

Mr. Thomas Wentworth Higginson, in a paper on Poe,* thus pleasantly alludes to this lady as she appeared to her friends in the autumn-tide of her life. She had, he says, "outlived her early friends, and loves, and hopes, and perhaps her literary fame, such as it was : she had certainly outlived her recognised ties with Poe, and all but his memory. There she dwelt in her little suite of rooms, bearing youth still in her heart and in her voice, and on her hair also, and in her dress. Her dimly-lighted parlour was always decked, here and there, with scarlet ; and she sat, robed in white, with her back always turned to the light, thus throwing a discreetly tinted shadow over her still thoughtful and noble face. She seemed a person embalmed while still alive ; it was as if she might dwell for ever there, prolonging into an indefinite future the tradition of a poet's love : and when we remembered that she had been Poe's betrothed, that his kisses had touched her lips, that she still believed in him, and was his defender, all criticism might well, for her sake, be disarmed, and her saintly life atone for his stormy and sad career." Mrs. Whitman expired on the 27th of June 1878, in the seventy-sixth year of her age.

The two sonnets which follow are among the latest tributes to the departed poet ; and are by "Stella" (Mrs. S. A. Lewis) ; one of the friends above mentioned :—

* The Boston *Literary World*, March 15th, 1879.

I.

FIRST MEETING.

WHEN first the sad notes of my youthful lyre
 Attracted thee unto my tuneful way—
 That up life's rugged steep before me lay,
 By fancy fashioned to my young desire,
 And made alluring by Hope's beacon fire—
 I dare not lift to thine my timid gaze,
 But, open-eared, my soul took in thy praise,
 And spread its pinions for a region higher
 Than Fame or Fate had taught it to aspire ;
 And when, to teach to me poetic art,
 Thy "Raven," piecemeal, thou didst take apart,
 With eloquent discourse that could not tire,
 I felt how much of Heaven there was in thee—
 The chalice of my soul o'erflow'd with melody.

II.

BENEATH THE ELM.

BENEATH the elm before thy cottage door
 At Fordham—whilst the sun his slanting beams
 Shot through the dark green boughs in golden gleams,
 And all around respectful silence wore—
 I've listened to thy song and classic lore ;
 Followed thee in thy wild, poetic dreams
 Over Parnassus and Olympian streams ;
 Where Phœbus and the Muses dwelt of yore,
 Making melodious all the Grecian shore ;
 Through Dante's "Hell" of writhing souls that teems
 With thoughts that later bards have made their themes,
 Midst Virgil's storms and Homer's battle roar,
 Until thou didst not seem of mortal birth,
 But some lone spirit sent from Heaven to earth.

LONDON, *December 1879.*

STELLA.*

* *New York Home Journal*, February 11, 1880.

APPENDIX E.

THE POE MEMORIAL, BALTIMORE.

ALTHOUGH most people appear to have felt that Edgar Allan Poe, of all his countrymen, least needed a marble monument to perpetuate *his* name, the feelings which prompted the erection of one by his fellow-citizens were, doubtless, generous and praiseworthy; and as evidence of such public appreciation, apart from the fact that it was the first memorial ever raised to a poet in America, the Baltimore monument deserves something more here than passing mention. On the 17th of November 1875 the long talked of cenotaph was unveiled, amid a large concourse of people who had assembled to witness, or to take part in, the ceremonies connected with the event. The proceedings were inaugurated by music, after which Professor William Elliott, Jr., delivered the following address, recounting the history of the movement that culminated in that day's celebration:—

“LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,—I purpose, in discharging the duty assigned me on this occasion, to give a brief historical sketch of the movement which culminates to-day in the dedication of a monument to the memory of the great American poet, Edgar Allan Poe, the first and only memorial expression of the kind ever given to an American on account of literary excellence.

"This extraordinary and unique genius, born in Boston, January 20th,* 1809, during a brief sojourn of his parents in that place, died on the 7th of October 1849, in this city, which is undoubtedly entitled to claim him as one of her distinguished sons. Two days thereafter, on the 9th of October, his mortal remains were interred in the cemetery attached to the Westminster Presbyterian Church, adjoining the building in which we are now assembled.

"In this connection, acting as a truthful chronicler, I deem it proper to state some facts in relation to the circumstances of the interment. The reliability of the statement I shall now make is sufficiently attested by the evidence of at least three of the gentlemen present on that occasion—possibly the only three who yet survive.

"I have been informed that the day was, for the season, more than ordinarily unpleasant, the weather being raw and cold; indeed, just such a day as it would have been more comfortable to spend within than without doors.

"The time of the interment was four o'clock in the afternoon; the attendance of persons at the grave, possibly in consequence of the state of the weather, was limited to eight, certainly to not more than nine, one being a lady.

"Of the number known to have been present were the Hon. Z. C. Lee, a classmate of the deceased at the University of Virginia; Henry Herring, Esq., a connection of Mr. Poe; Rev. W. T. D. Clemm, a relative of Mr. Poe's wife; our well-known fellow-citizen Neilson Poe, Esq., a cousin of the poet; Edmund Smith, Esq., and wife, the latter being a first cousin of Poe, and at this time his nearest

* Edgar Allan Poe was born on January 19th, 1809.—J. H. I.

living relative in this city; and possibly Dr. Snodgrass, the editor of the *Saturday Visiter*, the paper in which the prize story written by Poe first made its appearance. The clergyman who officiated at the grave was Rev. W. T. D. Clemm, already mentioned, a member of the Baltimore Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, who read the impressive burial service used by that denomination of Christians, after which all that was mortal of Edgar Allan Poe was gently committed to its mother earth.

"Another item, which it may not be inappropriate to record in this historical compend, I will now mention, namely, that George W. Spence, who officiated as sexton at the burial of Mr. Poe, is the same person who, after the lapse of twenty-six years, has superintended the removal of his remains, and those of his loving and beloved mother-in-law, Mrs. Clemm, and their reinterment in the lot in which the monument now stands.

"For a number of years after the burial of the poet no steps seem to have been taken toward marking his grave, until at length a stone was prepared for this purpose by order of Neilson Poe, Esq. Unfortunately, however, this stone never served the purpose for which it was designed. A train of cars accidentally ran into the establishment of Mr. Hugh Sisson, at which place the stone was at the time, and so damaged it as to render it unfit to be used as intended.

"Another series of years intervened, but yet no movement to mark the grave. True, articles almost innumerable, *ad nauseam*, made their appearance at short intervals during that time in different newspapers, but the authors

of those articles were mostly of that class of persons who employ their energies in finding fault with others, totally oblivious of the fact that they themselves no less deserved the censure they so liberally meted out.

“‘Poe’s neglected grave’ was the stereotyped expression of these modern Jeremiahs. Nor were they content to indulge in lamentations; not unfrequently our good city was soundly berated because of its alleged want of appreciation of the memory of one whose ashes, they intimated, had he been an Englishman, instead of filling an unmarked grave in an obscure cemetery, would have had accorded to them a place in that grand old abbey which England has appropriated as a mausoleum for her distinguished dead.

“But the ‘neglected grave’ was not always to remain such. At a regular meeting of the Public School Teachers’ Association, held in this hall October 7, 1865, Mr. John Basil, Jr., principal of No. 8 Grammar School, offered a paper, of which the following is a copy:—

“‘Whereas, It has been represented to certain members of the Association that the mortal remains of Edgar Allan Poe are interred in the cemetery of the Westminster Church without even so much as a stone to mark the spot; therefore,

“‘Resolved, That a committee of five be appointed by the President of this Association to devise some means best adapted in their judgment to perpetuate the memory of one who has contributed so largely to American literature.’

“This resolution was unanimously adopted, and a committee, consisting of Messrs. Basil, Baird, and J. J. G. Webster, Miss Veeder, and Miss Wise, appointed to carry out the purpose named.

"This committee reported in favour of the erection of a monument, and recommended that measures be at once taken to secure the funds necessary to accomplish this object. This recommendation was heartily endorsed by the Association, and without delay the committee entered upon the work of raising the funds.

"In this work the young ladies of the Western Female High School took an active and, as will be seen, a successful part. An entertainment of select readings by the pupils of that school, held in this hall on the evening of October 10, 1865, under the superintendence of Miss S. S. Rice, yielded the handsome sum of \$380. A literary and musical entertainment, held in Concordia Hall, December 7, 1865, in which the pupils of the Eastern and Western Female High Schools and those of Baltimore City College took part, increased the fund by the addition thereto of \$75.92. May 15, 1866, a contribution of \$50 was received from Professor Charles Davies, of New York, and on the 19th of the same month a donation of \$54 was received as an offering of the young ladies of 'Troy Female Seminary.' These sums, with interest added, amounted, as per report of Thomas D. Baird, treasurer, submitted March 23, 1871, to \$587.02. The enthusiasm that characterised the undertaking at the outset seemed now to have greatly abated, and serious thoughts were consequently entertained of abandoning the project. At this juncture a new committee, consisting of Messrs. Elliott, Kerr, and Hamilton, Miss Rice, and Miss Baer, was appointed to consider the matter.

"After mature deliberation, this committee reported, April 15, 1872, as follows: 'First, resolved, that the money now

in the hands of the treasurer of the 'Poe Memorial Fund' be appropriated to the erection of a monument, the same to be placed over Poe's remains. Second, that a committee of five be appointed by the President, with power to act as stated in the first resolution.' These resolutions were adopted, and the committee therein provided for appointed as follows: Wm. Elliott, Jr., A. S. Kerr, Alexander Hamilton, Miss S. S. Rice, and Miss E. A. Baer. September 2, 1874, this committee received from the estate of Dr. Thomas D. Baird, deceased, the late treasurer of the 'Poe Memorial Fund,' \$627.55, the amount of principal and interest to that date, which was immediately deposited in the Chesapeake Bank of this city. Believing that this amount could be increased to \$1000 by donations from some of our fellow-citizens who favoured the project, the committee applied to Mr. George A. Frederick, architect of the City Hall, for the design of a monument to cost about that sum.

"Mr. Frederick in due time submitted a design 'at once simple, chaste, and dignified,' but requiring for its realisation much more than the amount included in the expectations of the committee. Moreover, a new feature was now introduced, that of placing a medallion likeness of the poet on one of the panels of the monument, which would still further increase the cost. With a view of determining whether the amount necessary to complete the monument, according to the proportions it had now assumed, could be raised, applications were made to a number of our citizens for contributions. From one of acknowledged æsthetic taste a check of \$100 was promptly received. Two other gentlemen contributed \$50 each, while Miss. S.

S. Rice, a member of the committee, collected in small sums \$52 more.

"A knowledge of the 'world-wide' known liberality of Mr. George W. Childs, of Philadelphia, formerly one of our fellow-townsmen, induced the Chairman of the committee to drop him a note on the subject. Within twenty-four hours a reply was received from that gentleman expressive of his willingness to make up the estimated deficiency of \$650.

"The necessary amount having now been secured, the committee proceeded to place the construction and erection of the monument in the hands of Mr. Hugh Sisson, his proposal being the most liberal one received. How faithfully he has executed his commission will be seen when the covering that now veils the monument is removed. No one so well as the Chairman of the committee knows how anxious Mr. Sisson has been to meet even more than the expectations of those most concerned. To his generous liberality are we largely indebted for the reproduction of the classic lineaments of the poet in the beautiful and highly artistic medallion that adds so much to the attractiveness of the monument.

"To most of those present, I presume, it is known that the lot in which the monument is now located is not the one in which it was first placed. In deference to what was considered by the committee the popular wish, the monument was removed from its first location to its present one. The remains of Mr. Poe and also those of his mother-in-law were, as before intimated, removed at the same time. The new lot was secured mainly through the efforts of Mr.

John T. Morris, President of the School Board, to whom, and to all others who have in any way contributed to the consummation of this undertaking, I wish here, on behalf of the committee, to render thanks.

“In conclusion, allow me to congratulate all concerned that Poe’s grave is no longer a neglected one.”

Upon the conclusion of Professor Elliott’s address, which was listened to with deep attention, Miss Sarah S. Rice was introduced to the audience. To this lady, well known to the public from her elocutionary attainments, the greatest possible credit is due for the successful completion of the enterprise. The first money raised for the erection of the monument was through her personal efforts, and the entire monument, from its inception to the close, has enjoyed the benefits of her unremitting attention and effort. Miss Rice then read several letters from authors who had received invitations to be present on the occasion.

To the unveiling of Poe’s long-looked-for cenotaph most of his country’s best-known bards had been invited, but the only one, of more than local reputation, who found time to attend in person was Walt Whitman. His venerable head, with long white hair flowing over his shoulders, and his majestic figure, made him the observed of all observers.

After the letters had been read, the following poem, contributed by the well-known dramatic critic and littérateur, Mr. William Winter, was read by Miss Rice “with exquisite delicacy and utterance, and received with a burst of applause:”

AT POE'S GRAVE.

Cold is the pæan honour sings,
And chill is glory's icy breath,
And pale the garland memory brings
To grace the iron doors of death.

Fame's echoing thunders, long and loud,
The pomp of pride that decks the pall,
The plaudits of the vacant crowd—
One word of love is worth them all.

With dews of grief our eyes are dim ;
Ah ! let the tear of sorrow start,
And honor, in ourselves and him,
The great and tender human heart !

Through many a night of want and woe
His frenzied spirit wandered wild ;
Till kind disaster laid him low,
And Heaven reclaimed its wayward child.

Through many a year his fame has grown,—
Like midnight, vast, like starlight, sweet,—
Till now his genius fills a throne,
And nations marvel at his feet.

One meed of justice long delayed,
One crowning grace his virtues crave :—
Ah, take, thou great and injured shade,
The love that sanctifies the grave !

God's mercy guard, in peaceful sleep,
The sacred dust that slumbers here :
And, while around *this tomb we weep*,
God bless, for us, the mourner's tear !

And may his spirit, hovering nigh,
Pierce the dense cloud of darkness through,
And know, with fame that cannot die,
He has the world's affection too !

The Philharmonic Society then rendered the grand chorus, "He Watcheth over Israel," from the "Elijah" of

Mendelssohn, with fine effect ; after which, Professor Henry E. Shepherd proceeded to deliver the following address :—

“LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,—It is my purpose to speak of Edgar Allan Poe principally as a poet and as a man of genius. I shall abstain, for the most part, from personal incidents or biographical details. These, though not devoid of interest, pertain properly to the historian of literature, or to the biographer. Let his ‘strange, eventful history’ be reserved for some American Boswell, Masson, or Morley.

“Edgar A. Poe was born in 1809, the same year with Alfred Tennyson, the present Poet-laureate, and with Mrs. Browning, the most gifted poetess of any age. The third great era in English literature had then fairly commenced. The glory of the elder day was revived. The delusive splendour that had so long gilded the Augustan age of Anne paled before the comprehensive culture, the marvellous intellectual expansion, that distinguished the first thirty years of the present century. The spirit of poesy, no longer circumscribed by the arbitrary and enervating procedures of Dryden’s contemplated academy, ranged in unchecked freedom over seas and continents, arousing the buried forms of mediæval civilisation, the lay of the minstrel, the lyric of the troubadour, the ancient glory of the Arthurian cycle.

One day was as a thousand years in the growth and advancement of the human mind. Edgar was in his childhood when the Georgian era had attained the meridian of its greatness. He spent five years at school in England, from 1816 to 1821. During this interval little is known

of his personal history, save what he has left us in the story of 'William Wilson,' in which he depicts with a power of vivid delineation, worthy of the best days of De Quincey, his impressions of the school and its surroundings. We may feel assured, however, that his mind was rapidly unfolding, and with that keen susceptibility to external impressions, characteristic of the dawning intellect of youth, acquiring a permanent colouring from the wonderful drama that was enacting around him. The term of Edgar's school life in England was a period of intense poetical activity and creative power, heroic emprise, knightly valour, and brilliant achievement. The atmosphere was echoing with the strains of songsters, whose notes make as sweet music as when they fell for the first time upon the ears of our youthful poet and aroused him to the consciousness of poet power. Alfred Tennyson was seven years of age when Edgar arrived in England, and, during the time of Edgar's school life at Stoke Newington, was spending his play hours with Mallory's 'Morte D'Arthur' upon his knees, musing upon the faded splendours of the Table Rounde, and perhaps looking with prophetic vision to the time when Lancelot, Arthur, Percival, and Galahad should regain their ancient sway, with more than their ancient renown, as the mythical heroes of the British race. Mrs. Browning and Arthur Hallam, the hero of 'In Memoriam,' were in their childhood: Byron, Scott, Shelley, and Keats were in the zenith of their fame, and the English tongue had not been illustrated by so brilliant a constellation of poets since 'the spacious times of great Elizabeth.' It were difficult to imagine that this constellation did not exert an inspiring.

influence upon the genius and temperament of our youthful poet, an influence which must have determined in some degree his future career. He must have listened with that exquisite sympathy, of which the poetic temperament alone is capable, to the mournful story of Keats, 'the young Lycidas' of our poetic history.

"A strange resemblance in mental constitution may be discerned between these wayward children of genius; the same deep taint of Celtic sadness, the same enthusiastic worship of supernal beauty, the same relentless struggle with the immutability of fact. The delicately wrought sensibilities of Keats, who could 'feel the daisies growing over him,' strikingly recalls the memory of our own poet, who imagined that he could 'distinctly hear the darkness as it stole over the horizon.' 'A thing of beauty is a joy for ever,' was the animating principle of the genius of the one and the art of the other. In 1822 Edgar, then in his fourteenth year, returned to his native land. He attained to manhood at a time when by a revolution, familiar in the history of every literature, the supremacy was reverting from poetry to prose.

"The romantic fervour, the Spenserian symphonies of our last great poetic era, were gradually yielding to the steady advance of philological investigation, critical dissertation, and scientific analysis. A new reflective era, more brilliant than that of Pope or Bolingbroke, was dawning. The cold generalisations of reason, the relentless inductions of philosophy, chilled the glowing ardour of the preceding era. The publication of Macaulay's *Essay on Milton* in 1825 marked the translation from the sway of the imaginative

faculty to the present unsurpassed period in our prose literature. From this desultory outline of nearly contemporary literature, you will observe that our poet's intellectual constitution was formed under peculiar conditions. He does not belong chronologically to the Georgian era ; his position was, for the most part, one of comparative isolation, like that of Sackville, Wyatt, or Collins, in the midst of an unpoetic generation, unsustained by the consolations of poetic association or the tender endearments of poetic sympathy. When Poe attained to the full consciousness of his great powers, none of these quickening influences existed save as matters of history or poetic tradition. Tennyson, in England, was viewing nature in perspective, and involving his critics in webs as tangled and hopeless as that which enveloped the fatal lady of Shallot. Wordsworth had abjured the teachings of his early manhood. Shelley, Keats, and Byron were dead, Morris and Swinburne were yet unborn, and the thrones of the elder gods were principally filled by 'the idle singers of an empty day.' American poetry had then accomplished little that future ages will not willingly let die.

"The succession of sweet songsters is never broken ; the silver cord that binds in perennial union the spirit of Chaucer and the muse of Spenser is never severed, however slight and impalpable may be the filaments that bind it together. There are always some who retain the echoes of long-gone melodies, upon whom descends something of the inspiration of those grand epochs around which is concentrated so much of the glory of the English tongue. Such a position is not an anomaly in our literary history ;

such a relation was sustained by the chivalrous Surrey, who introduced into the discordant English of his time that peculiar form of verse which was attuned to the harmonies of Milton, and by means of which Shakspeare, after a long and painful struggle with 'the bondage of rhyming,' rose to the supreme height of poetic excellence. A similar relation was sustained by Sackville, the sombre splendour of whose 'Induction' proved him the worthy herald of Spenser's dawning greatness, and the gentle Cowper, who marks the transition from the school of Jonson and of Addison to the advent of the Gothic revival. Such is in some essential respects the position that Poe occupies among American poets in the order of poetic succession. Having traced somewhat in detail the conditions of the age during which our poet's intellectual constitution was developed, we are now prepared to appreciate the distinctive characteristics of his genius as revealed in his prose, but more especially in his poetry. It is known to students of our literary history, that in all periods of our literature, from the time that our speech was reduced to comparative uniformity, by the delicate discrimination and rare philological perception of Chaucer, there have existed two recognised schools of poetry—the native or domestic, and the classical. In some poets the classical element constitutes the animating principle, as in Milton, whose pages, sprinkled with the diamond dust of ancient lore 'thick as autumnal leaves that strew the brooks in Vallombrosa,' furnish the most impressive illustrations of its beauty and its power. A wonderful impulse was communicated to the development of literary poetry by that 'morning star of

modern song,' the poet Keats, and since his advent our poesy has tended more and more to divest itself of domestic sympathies, and to assume an artistic or classical character. Our poetry may have lost pliancy, but it has gained in elaboration and perfection of structure. Genius and imagination are not repressed, but are regulated by the canons of art, and from their harmonious alliance arises the unsurpassed excellence of Poe's maturer productions. In the school of classical poets, he must be ranked in that illustrious succession of bards which includes the names of Surrey, Spenser, Ben Jonson, Herrick, Milton, Shelley, and Keats. Having assigned to Poe an honourable eminence in the school of literary poets, I proceed to speak of the originality, the creative power displayed in his poetry, as well as his brilliant achievements in metrical combination. Specific points of resemblance may be discovered between his poetry and that of his contemporaries and predecessors, but no general or well-defined likeness; and few poets have displayed a more surpassing measure of creative power. Some of his maturer poems are almost without precedent, in form as well as in spirit.

"The legend of the Raven, related by Roger de Hoveden, and referring to the era of the Latin conquest of Constantinople, nor the legend of Herod Agrippa, cited by De Quincey in his celebrated Essay on Modern Superstition, furnish an adequate foundation for the text of Poe's masterpiece. The raven has constituted a prominent character in English poetry for many ages. In Macbeth, in Hamlet, in Sir David Lindsay, in Tickell's exquisite ballad of Colin and Lucy, and in Coleridge, the appearance

of this 'ominous bird of yore' will readily suggest itself to all lovers of our dramatic and lyric poetry. But none of these can be considered as the precursor of Poe's poem. The nearest approach to any distinctive feature of the 'Raven' is to be found, I suspect, in the dramas of Shakespeare, those unfailing sources of intellectual nutriment. The one word, *Mortimer*, of Harry Percy's starling, presents a marked phonetic resemblance to the one word *Nevermore* of Poe's raven, whose melancholy refrain seems almost the echo of the starling's unvarying note.

"No poem in our language presents a more graceful grouping of metrical appliances and devices. The power of peculiar letters is evolved with a magnificent touch; the sonorous melody of the liquids is a characteristic feature, not only of the refrain, but throughout the compass of the poem, their 'linked sweetness long drawn out' falls with a mellow cadence, displaying the poet's mastery of those mysterious harmonies which lie at the basis of human speech. The alliteration of the Norse minstrel and the Saxon bard, the continuity of the rhythms, illustrating Milton's ideal of true musical delight, in which 'the sense is variously drawn out from one verse into another,' the power of sustained interest and graphic delineation, are some of the features that place the 'Raven' foremost among the creations of poetic art in our age and in our land.

"But perhaps the especial glory of the 'Raven' is the novelty as well as the skill of its metrical forms. In the originality of his metrical combinations, Poe has surpassed almost every poet of our era except Tennyson. The invention of new metres, or new dispositions of those in

existence, is a task upon which few poets have ventured for centuries. From Surrey to Cowley was an era of transition and experiment. Under the ascendancy of the conventional school our poetry glided smoothly along in the orthodox ten-syllabled couplet, until Cowper broke through the consecrated measures of Pope and Dryden with a boldness and originality to which our literature had long been a stranger. Few poets of the Lake School ventured into the enchanted ground of metrical experiment. They were inclined rather to discard the restraints of verse, or to render it subordinate to the spontaneous expression of the thought. With the advent of the new poetic school, the increased attention to beauty of form and perfection of structure, the expanding of our metrical forms, became a question of serious import. The possible combinations of metre are infinite, 'but for centuries,' to use Poe's own language, 'no man had thought of doing an original thing in verse.' The 'Raven,' which is a novel blending of trochaic octometres, is one of the most brilliant achievements that our era has witnessed, and marks an epoch in the history of the metric art.

"In no respect is the genius of our poet more signally displayed than in his essay upon the 'Poetic Principle,' in which the æsthetics of poetry are discussed with a masterly comprehension, and a felicity of illustration that entitle the author to be ranked among the finest critics that have ever lived. I have often thought that a dissertation upon poetry by a great poet would constitute an invaluable addition to the critical resources of our literature. Oh ! that Shakspeare had left us but one line indicating the processes of his mind in the creation of *Lear* or *Cymbeline*, or that Milton had

bequeathed the rich legacy of a single item respecting the composition of 'L'Allegro' or the 'Masque of Comus.' It is one of the inestimable benefits conferred upon our literature by Edgar A. Poe, that he has transmitted to us a critical exposition of the principles of his art, which in perspicuity and correctness of conception is unsurpassed in the English language. A diligent reading of the Essay will reveal the fact that in his theory of poetry the mind of Poe was in perfect sympathy with the greatest masters, and the most discriminating expositors of the art of criticism. His theory of poetry is in thorough accord with that of Shakspeare, as indicated in the 'Midsummer Night's Dream,' and in a single line in the play of 'As You Like It.' It is repeated, in terms almost identical, by Shakspeare's contemporary, Lord Bacon, in his 'Advancement of Learning.' 'When I am asked for a definition of poetry,' Poe wrote to a friend, 'I think of Titania, of Oberon, of the "Midsummer Night's Dream" of Shakspeare.'

"The next distinguishing characteristic of Poe's poetry is its rhythmical power, and its admirable illustration of that mysterious affinity which binds together the sound and the sense. Throughout all the processes of creation a rhythmical movement is clearly discernible. Upon the conscious recognition of this principle are based all our conceptions of melody, all systems of intonation and inflection. In this dangerous sphere of poetic effort he attained a mastery over the properties of verse that the Troubadours might have aspired to emulate.

"I would next direct your attention to the classic impress of Poe's poetry, its felicitous blending of genius and culture,

and to the estimation in which his works are held in other lands. The Athenian sculptor in the palmiest days of Attic art wrought out his loveliest conceptions by the painful processes of continuous diligence. The angel was not evolved from the block by a sudden inspiration or a brilliant flash of unpremeditated art. By proceeding upon a system corresponding to the diatonic scale in music, the luxuriance of genius was regulated by the sober precepts and decorous graces of formal art. No finer illustration of conscious art has been produced in our era than the 'Raven.' In all the riper productions of our poet there is displayed the same graceful alliance of genius, culture, and taste. He attained the mastery over the most subtile metrical forms, even those to whose successful production the spirit of the English tongue is not congenial. The sonnet, that peculiarly Italian form of verse, immortalised by the genius of Petrarch, has been admirably illustrated in Poe's poem of 'Zante.' Indeed, much of the acrimony of his criticism arose from his painful sensitiveness to artistic imperfection, and his enthusiastic worship of the beautiful. The Grecian caste of his genius led to an idolatrous love of beauty, embodied in palpable or material types.

"This striving after sensuous beauty has formed a distinctive characteristic of all those poets who were most thoroughly imbued with the Grecian taste and spirit. It has left its impress deep upon the texture of our poetry, and many of our most silvery symphonies owe their inspiration to this source. In addition to the classic element, his poetry is pervaded by that natural magic of style, that strange unrest and unreality, those weird notes like the re-

frain of his own 'Raven,' 'so musical, so melancholy,' which are traceable to the Celtic influence upon our composite intellectual character. The quick sensibility, the ethereal temper, of these natural artists have wonderfully enlivened the stolid character of our Anglo-Saxon ancestors, and much of the style and constructive power that have reigned in English poetry since the age of Walter Map, of Layamon, and of Chaucer, may be justly attributed to the Celtic infusion into the Teutonic blood. Conspicuous examples may be discovered in Shakspeare, in Keats, in Byron, and in Poe.

"I have thus endeavoured to present to you the intellectual character of Edgar A. Poe, as it has revealed itself to me from the diligent study of his works, and from many contrasts and coincidences that literary history naturally suggests. I have attempted to show the versatility of his genius, the consummate as well as conscious art of his poetry, the graceful blending of the creative and the critical faculty—a combination perhaps the rarest that the history of literature affords—his want of deference to prototypes, or morals, the chaste and scholarly elegance of his diction, the Attic smoothness and the Celtic magic of his style. Much of what he has written may not preserve its freshness or stand the test of critical scrutiny in after times, but when subjected to the severest ordeal of varying fashion, popular caprice, 'the old order changing, yielding place to new,' there is much that will perish only with the English language. The maturer productions of Poe have received the most enthusiastic tributes from the sober and dispassionate critics of the older world.

"I shall ever remember the thrill of grateful appreciation

with which I read the splendid eulogium upon his genius in the *London Quarterly Review*, in which he is ranked far above his contemporaries, and pronounced one of the most consummate artists of our times, potentially the greatest critic of our era, and possessing perhaps the finest ear for rhythm that was ever formed. You are doubtless familiar with the impression produced by the 'Raven' upon the mind of Mrs. Browning, 'Shakspeare's daughter and Tennyson's sister.' It is but recently that Algernon Swinburne, one of the master-spirits of the new poetic school, has accorded to Poe the pre-eminence among American poets. Alfred Tennyson has expressed his admiration of Poe, who, with true poetic ken, was among the first to appreciate the novelty and delicacy of his method, and, at a time when the Laureate's fame was obscured by adverse and indiscriminating criticism, plainly foresaw the serene splendour of his matured greatness.

"An appreciative and generous Englishman has added to the literature of our language a superb edition of Poe's works, in which ample recognition is accorded to his rare and varied poems, and the calumnies of his acrimonious biographer are refuted by evidence that cannot be gainsaid or resisted. No reader of English periodical literature can fail to observe the frequent tributes to his genius, the numerous allusions to his memory, the impressive parallelisms between Poe and Marlowe, the contemporary of Shakspeare and Greene, the rival of the great dramatist, that have appeared in the columns of the *Athenæum*, the *Academy*, the *British Quarterly*, and the transactions of the new Shakespeare Society. Nor is this lofty estimate

of his powers confined to those lands in which the English language is the vernacular speech; it has extended into foreign climes, and aroused appreciative admiration where English literature is imperfectly known and slightly regarded.

“Let us rejoice that Poe’s merits have found appropriate recognition among his own countrymen, and that the Poets’ Corner in our Westminster is at last rescued from the ungrateful neglect which, for a quarter of a century, has constituted the just reproach of our State and metropolis. I recognise in the dedication of this monument to the memory of our poet an omen of the highest and noblest import, looking far beyond the mere preservation of his fame by the ‘dull, cold marble’ which marks his long-neglected grave. The impulse which led to its erection coincides in spirit and in character with those grand movements, which the zeal and enthusiasm of patriots and scholars in Great Britain and in America have effected, within the past ten years, for the perpetuation of much that is greatest in the poetry of the English tongue. At last we have the works of Geoffrey Chaucer restored to their original purity by the praiseworthy diligence of Furnival, Morris, and Bradshaw. At last we are to add to the golden treasury of our literature genuine editions of Shakspeare, in which the growth of his genius and his art will be traced by the graceful scholarship and penetrating insight of Tennyson, Ingleby, Spedding, Simpson, and Browning. Ten years have accomplished what centuries failed to achieve, in rescuing from strange and

unpardonable indifference the masterpieces of our elder literature, the Sibylline leaves of our ancient poesy.

"This graceful marble, fit emblem of our poet, is the expression, perhaps unconscious, undesigned, but none the less effective, of sympathy with this great intellectual movement of our era. I hail these auspicious omens of the future of our literature with gratitude and delight. But while we welcome these happy indications, while we rejoice in the critical expansion of our peerless literature, let us not disregard the solemn injunction conveyed by this day's proceedings. While we pay the last tributes of respect to the memory of him who alone was worthy, among American poets, to be ranked in that illustrious procession of bards, around whose names is concentrated the glory of the English tongue from Chaucer to Tennyson, let us cherish the admonition to nurture and stimulate the poesy of our land, until it ascend 'with no middle flight' into the 'brightest heaven of invention,' and the regions of purest phantasy."

During the delivery of his address, Professor Shepherd was frequently interrupted by applause. When he had concluded, Poe's "Raven" was recited, followed by a rendering of the *Inflammatus*, from Rossini's *Stabat Mater*, by the local Philharmonic Society. Mr. J. H. Latrobe then gave some personal reminiscences of the poet, and, upon the conclusion of his remarks Mr. Neilson Poe, Sr. a cousin of the poet, was introduced by Professor Elliott, and said: "The relatives of the late poet would indeed be wanting in sensibility, as well as gratitude, if they let this occasion pass without some acknowledgment of their special obligation to those

who have reared the memorial soon to be unveiled over the grave of their kinsman. It is impossible that they can be indifferent to the increasing fame of one whose ancestry is common to themselves, and who share his blood. They cannot but look with gratification at the fact that the imputations on the personal character of Poe, which envy has invented and malice magnified, can now, under a closer investigation and an impartial criticism, be judged with charity and justice. Personal animosity may have created slanders which a kindlier spirit is now rejecting, and the good and noble traits of character of the dead are being recognised by an impartial public."

Those present then repaired to Westminster Churchyard, where all that is mortal of Poe now reposes. The remains have been removed from their first resting-place, in an obscure corner of the churchyard, to the corner of Fayette and Greene Streets, where the monument now covering the grave can be seen from Fayette Street.

While the Philharmonic Society rendered the "Sleep and Rest" by Barnby, adapted for the occasion from Tennyson's "Sweet and Low" by Mrs. Eleanor Fullerton, of Baltimore, the Committee on the Memorial and others gathered around the monument.

While the dirge was being sung, Professor Elliott and Miss Rice removed the muslin in which the memorial was veiled, and it was then for the first time presented to the gaze of the public. The monument was crowned with a wreath composed of ivy, and another of lilies and evergreens. After the dirge, Poe's "Annabel Lee" was recited, and selections from "The Bells" were given by Mrs. Dillehunt. This con-

cluded the ceremonies, and the crowd which had collected in the graveyard came forward to view the monument.

During the unveiling a large throng was gathered in the vicinity of Fayette and Greene Streets, unable to gain admission to the Female High School or the churchyard.

The monument is of the pedestal or cippus form, and is eight feet high; the surbase is of Woodstock granite, six feet square, the other portions being of white-veined Italian marble. The pedestal has an Attic base three feet ten inches square; the die block is a cube three feet square and three feet two inches high, relieved on each face by a square-projecting and polished plane, the upper angles of which are broken and filled with a carved rosette. On the front panel is the bas-relief bust of the poet, modelled by Frederick Volck from a photograph in possession of Mr. Neilson Poe. On the opposite panel are inscribed the dates of the poet's birth and death. The die block is surmounted by a bold and graceful frieze and cornice four feet square, broken on each face in the centre by a segment of a circle. The frieze is ornamented at the angles by richly-carved acanthus leaves, and in the centre by a lyre crowned with laurel. The whole is capped by a blocking three feet square, cut to a low pyramidal form. "The monument is simple and chaste, and strikes more by graceful outline than by crowding with unmeaning ornament." Mr. Geo. A. Frederick was the architect.

A TRIBUTE FROM THE STAGE.—"A pleasing feature of the ceremonies was the placing upon the monument of a large wreath of flowers, made up principally of camelias, lilies, and tea roses. Together with this was deposited a floral tribute

in the shape of a raven, made from black immortelles. The large petals of the lilies suggested the 'bells' immortalised by Poe's genius, the significance of the other emblems being obvious. These were tributes from the company at Ford's Grand Opera House, Mrs. Germon being mainly instrumental in getting them up. Poe's mother had been an actress at Holliday Street Theatre, which fact had been preserved in the traditions of the stage, and had something to do with inspiring this tribute."

APPENDIX F.

BIOGRAPHIES OF EDGAR ALLAN POE.

To furnish a full and analytic account of the biographies of Edgar Allan Poe would be a task almost equal to that of rewriting his entire life. The history of this poet's biographies might, indeed, fill a fresh chapter, and that by no means the least memorable, in the *Curiosities of Literature*. Naturally, only a concise and cursory summary of these sketches can be given here. Previous to the poet's death, several slight biographical notices were published in various forms, and more or less diluted by speculative criticism. Griswold's works on American Poets and Prose Writers, contained a certain number of correct and of incorrect *data*, to which Mr. J. R. Lowell added his *quantum*, in *Graham's Magazine* for February 1845, in a clever but unsympathetic paper on "Edgar Allan Poe." Poe died on the 7th of October 1849, and two days later a somewhat lengthy and bitterly hostile paper on his life and character appeared in the *New York Tribune*, over the signature of "Ludwig." N. P. Willis, commenting in the *Home Journal* upon this posthumous hostility, revealed the fact that the pseudonymous reviler of the dead was Rufus Griswold. John Neal immediately denounced the calumniator's sketch as "false and malicious," and other friends and admirers were equally disgusted with it; whilst Mr. George R.

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Graham—that “noble fellow,” as Mrs Clemm styles him—knowing more of the connection between the dead lion and his dissector than any one else, published a long and eloquent reply in *Graham's Magazine* for March 1850, in which he justly termed the characterisation by the *soi-disant* “Ludwig,” “the fancy sketch of a jaundiced vision,” “an immortal infamy,” and other similar appellations.

Meanwhile, Mr. Powell, an English author resident in New York, had just completed a work on “The Living Authors of America,” in which a pleasant, unprejudiced, biographical sketch was given of Poe's career. The book, however, did not appear until after the poet's death; its *data* are very flattering to Poe, but do not appear very reliable.

In March 1850 was published, in the *Southern Literary Messenger*, what Griswold styles an “Eulogium” on Poe, but what really was a still more dastardly attack on the dead man than the unsavoury “Ludwig” article. It had evidently been written and printed in hot haste, and was so disgraceful and cowardly that the editorial proprietor of the magazine, Mr. John R. Thompson, deemed it necessary to append a short printed note, to the effect that had it not been inserted during his absence, and not seen by him until too late to stop it, it should not have appeared in the *Messenger*. Who wrote this article? It is generally ascribed to Mr. J. M. Daniel; yet, strange to say, it not only uses lengthy passages of “Ludwig's” sketch without inverted commas, or other signs of quotation, but, when Griswold's long “Memoir of Poe” appeared in the *Boston International Magazine*, he also made use of long extracts from the “Eulogium” without acknowledgment. Certainly

he does refer to it as his authority for one of the blackest crimes he charges Poe with, and which he himself not unaptly styles unfit for "any register but that of hell." Was not this miscalled (by Griswold) 'defender,' then, Griswold himself, or some one acting under his inspiration?

In 1850 appeared the third volume of Poe's works, prefaced by the so-styled "Memoir" of the poet, a concentration of hatred and malice that had already done duty, as pointed out above, in the *International Magazine*. It is quite impossible to comprehend the immense injury this publication did to Poe's memory. Its author appeared to be in possession of the facts—as editor of the poet's works he was in possession of the field—and, therefore, all the numerous writers, friendly or hostile, who essayed biographical sketches of Poe, resorted to Griswold for their *data*. And, notwithstanding intermittent bursts of indignation, no new life of Poe, founded upon evidence independent of that proffered by this initial biographer, was published until the present writer's sketch, introductory of the first complete edition of the poet's works, appeared in October 1874. During this quarter of a century, however, several noteworthy "memoirs of Poe" saw the light. The best known of these was the essay of Baudelaire, and it is chiefly remarkable as the attempt, by a man of genius, to explain Poe's character *as described by Griswold*, by an ingenious theory of his own. Of course he failed in *that*, however valuable his essay otherwise may be and truly is. Baudelaire, it should be added, had read the "Eulogium," and, probably, Powell's account of Poe already referred to.

Next in importance to the French critic's characterisation

of Poe, is that by James Hannay, prefixed to the 1853 English edition of the Poetical Works. It is a charming and appreciative sketch, but having no biographical details other than Griswold's to go by, and being as instinctively attracted to Poe as was Baudelaire, Hannay also started a theory as ingenious and as unsatisfactory as his, to account for the poet's presumed misdeeds. A writer in the *British Quarterly Review* for July 1875, now understood to be Dr. A. H. Japp, in a clever and impartial article on "Edgar Allan Poe," has very thoroughly sifted the errors promulgated by the two writers, and thus disposes of the latest offspring of a remarkable group: "Owing to influences precisely similar, Mr. Curwen, in his 'Sorrow and Song,' errs in the same direction as Baudelaire and Hannay; and *his* sympathy seems wholly misplaced, because he *will* drive against society, instead of acknowledging frankly Poe's faults and perversities."

The above writers, as intimated, did not dispute Griswold's premises, only his inferences, but others, more or less known in the literary world, doubted the trustworthiness of both. The editor of Chambers' "Handbook of American Literature," writing in 1854, mildly expressed doubts of several of the allegations made against Poe by his biographer. Nemesis began to loom in the distance. In April 1857 Mr. Moy Thomas drew attention to the fact "that Poe's miserable story rested wholly upon Griswold's Memoir; that all since him have followed Griswold, with the exactness of a Hebrew copyist, trembling at the prophet's curse upon all who should add to or take away one tittle of the text." "It did appear to me to be an important

and an interesting point," he remarks, "to learn what explanation, if any, Griswold himself had given of the reasons which had determined him to fulfil his painful task." Mr. Moy Thomas then proceeded to show, "what even American readers appear to have forgotten, that when Mr. Griswold's Memoir was first published, its assertions were denied by many who had known Poe, that no person corroborated the worst parts of his story, that some went so far as to impugn his motives; and that others, who had known and had closer relations with the poet, gave accounts differing materially from Griswold's." Finally, after alluding to the enmity existing between the poet and his biographer, Mr. Moy Thomas concludes his highly suggestive paper, by reminding English readers that there are "portraits of Poe less repulsive than that one which is best known." In November 1857 appeared in *Russell's Magazine*, Charleston, S.C., a still more remarkable vindictory article, by Professor James Wood Davidson; in this defence of Edgar Poe's fair fame, many of Griswold's imputations were proved to be false, whilst others were rendered extremely improbable. This important step was contemporaneous with similar efforts made by Captain Mayne Reid, Mr. T. C. Clarke, and other personal acquaintances of the deceased poet, in the magazines and newspapers, and by Mr. L. A. Wilmer, in his book called "Our Press Gang." The slow progress made by these justificatory pieces may be comprehended when reading the last named author's words respecting an article he had published on "Edgar A. Poe and his Calumniators." "I do not know," he states, "that this vindication was copied

by a single paper ; whereas the whole press of the country seemed desirous of giving circulation and authenticity to the slanders."

But the ball had been set rolling, and in 1860, when Mrs. Whitman published her beautiful little monograph on "Edgar Poe and his Critics," several influential literati were prepared to add the impetus of their words towards aiding the cause of truth and justice. Mrs. Whitman's defence of her dead friend dealt almost entirely with his literary character, "leaving to some later writer the task of giving to the world a more impartial memoir of the poet than Griswold's," but at the same time she pointed out that that author's "perverted facts and baseless assumptions had been adopted into every subsequent memoir and notice of the poet," and therefore she published her book as an earnest protest against such a "great wrong to the dead."

Harper's *New Monthly Magazine* for September 1872, contained an article on "Edgar Allan Poe" which, although showing animus against the poet, was noteworthy as affording evidence of original research. In 1875 this article, revised and enlarged, and for some occult reason "submitted" to English readers, did duty as "an original memoir," as the introduction to a new American edition of the Poetical Works. In the *British Quarterly Review* it is disposed of thus: "The last addition to the Poe biography is 'An Original Memoir,' by R. H. Stoddard, a gentleman of New York, who denounces Griswold, and then proceeds simply to surpass him in his own line ; raking together such a mass of irrelevant gossip as we never read before."

During the last fifteen years the writer of the present

biography has published papers in vindication of Poe's memory, but it was not until the beginning of 1874 that he was enabled to adduce more than a few isolated items in support of his theory of Griswold's untrustworthiness. In January of that year he commenced a series of articles in the *Mirror*, on "New Facts" about the poet; in June the same year he contributed a still more exculpatory sketch to *Temple Bar Magazine*, and in the following October published a thorough vindication of Poe, as an introduction to the first volume of a complete edition of his works. In March 1875, he revised and abridged this sketch of "Edgar Allan Poe," for the *International Review*, and in 1877 contributed a further revision of it, as an introduction to the *Baltimore Memorial*, a *livre de luxe* in every respect most creditable to the "Monumental City:" this handsome volume, besides other interesting and original matter, contained Colonel Preston's pleasant reminiscences of his famous school-fellow.

In 1877, a New York edition of Poe's poems was pre-faced by "a New Memoir" by Mr. E. L. Didier, a gentleman who appears to have been collecting "Poeana" for some time past, and who, ultimately, came into possession of the present writer's life of the poet: by aid of this he was enabled to compile "a New Memoir," forgetting, however, in the hurry of publication, to acknowledge the chief source of his "much fresh and interesting information." Mr. Francis Gerry Fairfield, a New York journalist, and the author of an innumerable number of "queer" papers on, *from*, and about Poe, thus briefly summarised his opinion on Mr. Didier's book:—

"Dear D——, in your biography of Poe,
The real cause for rue is,
That what is true was published years ago,
And what is new not true is :
And the new poems that you tell about
Upon the title-page, are all left out."

"The Last Days of Edgar Poe," by Mrs. S. A. Talley-Weiss, was a noticeable contribution towards the poet's biography that appeared in *Scribner's Magazine* for March 1878. The present writer has ventured to avail himself of some portions of this account of Poe's last few weeks life.

Numerous other books and sketches bearing upon the subject of this biography might be mentioned, but beyond those already referred to here, or in the body of the work, few or any are of biographical value, although several might be cited as of critical worth, such as Dr. Landa's "Noticias Biograficas de Edgard Poe," prefixed to the 1858 Spanish collection of Poe's tales, and Dr. W. Hand Browne's clever analysis of "Eureka," in the *New Eclectic Magazine* for 1868, remarkable as the only known attempt to examine that scientific work scientifically.

APPENDIX G.

THE BIBLIOGRAPHY OF EDGAR ALLAN POE.

THE following account of the bibliography of Edgar Allan Poe is scarcely likely to prove complete, or exhaustive, although no efforts have been spared to make it both. Doubtless translations have appeared, and disappeared, without leaving any discoverable traces in the somewhat imperfectly-kept book registers of the past, whilst even distinct native publications—anonymous and pseudonymous—as well as various editions of Poe's known works, may no longer be recognisable. Separate book publications only are referred to here; magazine, newspaper, and other ephemeral issues, have been ignored. A full account having been given in this "Life" of the volumes published during his lifetime, only a bare recital of their titles is now furnished. It may be mentioned that the poet's name and works are well known in Poland, Hungary, and Russia, but whether by means of native or foreign versions, or by journals, or books, is unknown to us; in France and Spain Poe's tales have been frequently published in the journals, *en feuilleton*.

AMERICAN.

Tamerlane and Other Poems. Boston. 1827. 16mo. 40 pp.

- Al Aaraaf, Tamerlane, and Minor Poems.* Baltimore. 1829.
16mo. 66 pp.
- Poems.* (Second edition.) New York. 1831. 16mo.
124 pp.
- The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym.* New York. 1838.
12mo. 252 pp.
- Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque.* Philadelphia. 1840.
(1839.) 12mo. 2 vols., 243, 228 pp.
- The Conchologist's First Book.* Philadelphia. 1840. (1839.)
16mo. 166 pp.
- The Conchologist's First Book.* (Second edition.) Philadelphia. 1840. 12mo. 166 pp.
- Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque.* (Second edition.)
New York. 1845. 16mo. 2 vols.
- Tales.* New York. 1845. 12mo. 228 pp.
- The Raven and Other Poems.* New York. 1845. 12mo.
92 pp.
- Eureka. A Prose Poem.* New York. 1848. 8vo. 144 pp.
(A second edition is stated to have been issued.)
- The Works.* Tales, Poems, &c. New York. 1850. 12mo.
2 vols. pp. xx., 484, xxvi., 496.
- The Literati* (with Memoir by R. W. Griswold). New York.
1850. 12mo. pp. iv., 608. (This book was issued as
vol. iii. of the *Works*.)
- The Works.* New edition. New York. 1850. 12mo.
3 vols.
- The Works.* New edition. New York. 1853. 12mo.
4 vols. (This "4 vol. edition" included "Arthur
Gordon Pym," and other hitherto unedited tales.)
- The Works.* Fifteenth edition. New York. 1858. 12mo.

4 vols. (All later editions of *The Works* were only reprints of this collection until 1876, when additional pieces from the Edinburgh 1874-75 collection were included.)

The Poetical Works (with Memoir). New York. 1858. large 8vo. (This Memoir, founded on Griswold's, is ascribed to C. Briggs.)

The Poetical Works (with Memoir). New York. 1859. 32mo.

Editions of the *Poetical Works*, in all shapes and sizes, with or without memoir, illustrated or not, continued to issue from the press; the contents being as published in the first 1850 posthumous edition, unaltered and unadded to, until a collection in 1875, when the early lines "To Helen" were omitted, and eight of the juvenile, long-neglected pieces of the 1831 edition were added. In the "Memorial Edition" of 1876, (Memoir by J. H. Ingram,) "To Helen" reappeared; whilst seven of the 1831 pieces were again omitted: other slight variations occur in various editions now in circulation.

BRITISH.

The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym. London. 1838. 8vo. (A reprint, apparently, of the New York edition, and issued by the London branch of the New York firm.)

The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym. London. 1841. 4to. (In the "Novelist's Newspaper.")

The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym. London. 1859. 8vo.

The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym. London. 1861. 8vo.
(No. 3 of "The Shilling Series.")

Several other editions of this romance have appeared in England, but cannot be traced.

Tales. London. 1845. 8vo. (Reprint of New York Edition.)

Tales and Sketches. London. 1852. 8vo.

Tales of Mystery, Imagination, and Humour. London. 1852.
8vo. 2 vols. Illustrated. (Two series, being vols.
i. and ix. of the "Readable Books" library.)

Tales of Mystery, Imagination, and Humour. London. 1853.
8vo. 2 vols.

Tales of Mystery, Imagination, and Humour. Halifax. 1855.
16mo. (As a vol. of "The Cottage Library.")

Tales of Mystery, Imagination, and Humour. London.
1864. 8vo.

The Works. London. 1872. 8vo. (This so-called edition
of "The Works" does not contain more than about
one-third of the Edinburgh collection : it is believed
to have had a very large sale.)

The Complete Works. (Memoir by J. H. Ingram.) Edin-
burgh. 1874-75. 8vo. 4 vols. pp. cxxii., 2176.

The Raven and Other Poems. London. 1846. 16mo.
(This is a reprint of the New York 1845 edition.)

The Poetical Works. London. 1852. 12mo.

Do. (Life by J. Hannay.) London. 1853.
8vo. Illustrated.

The Poetical Works. London. 1856. 12mo.

Do. (With Poems by Dana !) London.
1857. 12mo. Illustrated.

The Poetical Works. (Memoir by C. Briggs?) London.
1858. (1857.) 8vo.

The Poetical Works. London. 1858. 12mo.

Do. do. 1859. 8vo.

Do. do. 1860. 18mo.

(Many reprints of these editions have been issued, some illustrated, some not, but only those below need be specified.)

The Poetical Works. London. 1866. (With selections of his Sketches and Reviews, and with Life. One vol. of the "Library of Popular Authors.")

The Poetical Works. Edinburgh. 1869. 8vo. ("Original Memoir," founded on Griswold.)

The Poetical Works. Edinburgh. 1869. 4to. Illustrated.

The Raven. Glasgow. 1869. 24mo.

The Poetical Works. London. 1871. 8vo. Illustrated.

Do. Edinburgh. 1872. 12mo. do.

Do. do. 1872. 8vo.

Do. London. (?)

(This last is one of "The Emerald Series;" the thirteenth thousandth was announced some short time ago.

FRENCH.

Histoires Extraordinaires. Paris. 1856. 12mo.

Nouvelles Histoires Extraordinaires. Paris. 1857. 12mo.

Aventures d'Arthur Gordon Pym. do. 1858. 12mo.

Eurêka. Paris. 1863. 12mo.

Histoires Grotesques et Sérieuses. Paris. 1865. 12mo.

The above are Baudelaire's world-famed translations of

Poe's works; they have gone through many editions, and have circulated by thousands; the dates of first publication only are given.

"*Les Contes d'Edgar Poe.*" Paris. 1846†

Nouvelles Choisies. Paris. 1853. 12mo.

Contes Inédits. do. 1862. 12mo.

Mille et Deuxième Nuit. Coulommiers. 1869. 4to. Illustré.

Le Corbeau. Traduit par S. Mallarmé. Paris. 1875. Large folio. Illustré par E. Manet.

(To this magnificent *édition de luxe* of Poe's poetic *chef d'œuvre*, the following two works, by the same translator and illustrator, are announced as in preparation, but have not yet been published.)

La Cité en la Mer. Paris. —

Les Poèmes d'Edgar Poe. Paris. —

GERMAN.

Novellen von E. A. Poe. Illustrated. Leipzig. 1855-58. 2 vols. pp. 192, 192. (Issued in the "*Familien-Bibliothek.*")

Ausgewählte Werke. Leipzig. 1853-58. 3 vols. pp. 200, 214, 197. (Issued in the "*Amerikanische-Bibliothek,*" as vols. xxxvii., xxxviii., and xcix.)

Tales of Mystery, Imagination, and Humour. Leipzig. 1855-56. 2 vols. (Vols. vi. and vii. of "The English Library.")

Select Works of E. A. Poe. With Memoir. Leipzig. 1854-58. 2 vols. (Vols. xiii. and xiv. of "Dürr's Collection of American Authors.") pp. 246, 280.

- Unbegreifliche Ereignisse und geheimnisvolle Thaten.* Stuttgart. 1861. pp. 580. 8vo.
- Erstaunliche Geschichten und unheimliche Begebenheiten.* Stuttgart. 1859. pp. 456.
- Unheimliche Geschichten.* Jena. 1879. pp. 164. 8vo.
- Der Rabe, die Glocken, und Lenore.* Philadelphia. 1864. 16mo.
- Der Rabe.* Mit einer biographischen Skizze. Philadelphia. 1869. 8vo. Illustrated.

SPANISH.

- Historias Extraordinarias.* Noticias por el Doctor Landa. Madrid. 1858.
- Historias Extraordinarias.* Two Series. Madrid. 1859. 2 vols. (Forming 2 vols of the "*Biblioteca de Viaje.*")
- Aventuras de Arturo Gordon Pym.* Barcelona. 1863. 4to.

ITALIAN.

- Racconti Incredibili.* Illustrated. Milan. 1876. 8vo.
- Racconti.* Milan. 1871 (Forming No. 38 of the "*Biblioteca Nuova.*")

AUSTRALIAN.

- Poetical Works.* Melbourne. 1868. 8vo.

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